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CHINA DAILY

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Xi praises volunteers, urges public effort in trash sorting

By CAO DESHENG

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President Xi Jinping has called for promoting trash sorting as a new trend of low-carbon life amid the nation's efforts to improve people's living environment and advance ecological conservation.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remark on Sunday in a letter of reply to volunteers who are engaged in trash sorting in a residential community in Shanghai's Hongkou district.

He visited the community during an inspection tour in Shanghai in November 2018, when he chatted with the volunteers and said that "waste handling requires everyone's participation".

In July 2019, Shanghai became China's first city to make sorting household waste compulsory. A number of other cities have followed in Shanghai's footsteps in the following years, introducing mandatory household and workplace trash sorting.

Around 300 cities have carried out trash sorting work, with an average coverage rate of 82.5 percent in residential communities.

Xi has paid much attention to trash sorting and recycling and has made multiple instructions on the issue.

Recently, some volunteer representatives from the community wrote to Xi, reporting to him the achievement they have made in trash sorting and expressing their determination to make greater contributions to promoting waste sorting and disposal.

In his reply letter, Xi said that he was deeply impressed by the volunteers' enthusiasm for public welfare and their passion for serving the people.

Xi said he was gratified to learn that after recent years of promotion, the community has made new progress in trash sorting, while its residents' civility has been enhanced and its environment has become more beautiful.

Noting that trash sorting and recycling is a systematic project that requires concerted, long-term efforts from all parties, he called for precise measures and the active participation of both urban and rural residents.

Xi expressed his hope that those volunteers could continue to play their unique role in grassroots governance, encourage more residents to develop the habit of sorting trash, and contribute to promoting the construction of an ecological civilization and improving the level of civilization among the whole society.

Hua Lei, one of the trash sorting volunteers, said that over the past five years, the practice of trash sorting has become a proactive and even subconscious behavior among local residents.

"Many young people have played a role in raising public awareness and promoting education in the first years. For example, they created short plays to tell the elderly residents in vivid ways how to do trash sorting. Also, after learning related knowledge at school, many students spread the information to their parents and families," she said.

Zhou Wenting in Shanghai contributed to this story.

Micron curb helps boost security

Move aims to safeguard nation's critical information infrastructure, experts say

By MA SI

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China's law-based decision to ask its critical information infrastructure operators to stop buying products from Micron Technology is a necessary move to safeguard national security and is in line with international practices, officials and experts said on Monday.

The move could reshape the nation's chip supply chains, bringing more opportunities to other competitive domestic and overseas memory chipmakers, they added.

The comments came after the Cyberspace Administration of China said in a statement on Sunday that products of Micron, a United States-based global supplier of semiconductors, sold in China have not passed a recent cybersecurity review, and operators of the country's key information infrastructure should stop purchasing its products.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a news conference on Monday that the decision is to prevent relevant products' cybersecurity risks from endangering China's critical information infrastructure.

"China is a country of the rule of law. … All enterprises in China should abide by Chinese law in their operations. Judicial authorities will investigate any suspected illegal activities in accordance with the law," Mao said.

"As long as enterprises, regardless of which country they are from, comply with Chinese laws and regulations, we welcome them and their products and services to enter the Chinese market. There is nothing to worry about," Mao added.

The Cybersecurity Law outlines rules safeguarding critical information infrastructure — technology systems in sectors including telecommunications, transportation and defense — that Chinese regulators believe would be vulnerable if they malfunctioned or leaked data, experts said.

Bai Ming, deputy director of international market research at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the decision is in line with international practices in terms of placing greater emphasis on cybersecurity.

Countries such as the US are also adopting increasingly tougher security reviews on electronic products concerning data, because data has become a key aspect of national security, Bai said.

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A passenger scans her palm on Sunday to pass through a ticket gate at the Daxing Jichang station on the Daxing Airport Express subway line in Beijing. CUI JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Beijing introduces palm-print access on subway line

By DU JUAN

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A subway line that links downtown Beijing with Daxing International Airport in the Chinese capital now allows passengers to enter and exit stations by just scanning the palm of a hand, setting an example of how using biometric data in public transportation can make commuting more convenient.

The pilot program was launched on Sunday on the Daxing Airport Express subway line to spare passengers the trouble of swiping a card or scanning a QR code to catch a train, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport said.

Any commuter age 14 and above can first register the print of either palm through a simple, automated process and provide relevant information to authorize the payment gateway of WeChat, a popular messaging app in China.

Once the palm print is registered, a commuter can scan the palm at any automated ticket gate to pass through. The fare is automatically deducted after exit.

"Passengers can just place a palm above the scanning machine when entering or exiting a subway station. The ticket gate will open if the palm scan matches the palm print registered voluntarily," said Zhang Li, an expert at the Beijing Metro Network Control Center.

The ticket gates can recognize the user's palm print and veins without contact, which is more hygienic, faster and safer than conventional check-in methods, Zhang said.

The biometric method combines the use of palm print and vein mapping, which are different for every individual. The registration is a one-time process and doesn't require renewal. The commission said data masking and encryption technologies have been applied to protect user information.

Xin Jianhua, general manager of the public service center at WeChat Pay, said palm scans can be gradually used in offices, schools, gyms and restaurants, as it requires no contact and is therefore more safe and efficient.

"Currently, it is very useful for the elderly and those who have physical limitations. They can take the subway without using smartphone apps," he said.

Use of biometric data allows passengers to take subway trains if they do not have cash or when they forget their subway cards, he added.

MUSEUMS PLACE SUSTAINABILITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Green, low-carbon solutions sought by institutions

By WANG RU

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indepth

A harmonious scene of peaceful coexistence between humankind and nature unfolds on a fan that resembles a tree.

A bird flies freely in the sunshine; a variety of lush plants grow as a rabbit hides among them; and a girl plays on a swing, her long hair flowing in the wind.

Designed mainly by Jusuk Ma, a French university student who worked as an intern for the International Council of Museums, or ICOM, in the past year, these scenes compose the official poster for International Museum Day this year, an annual event that promotes the importance of museums.

The theme for this day, which fell on Thursday, is "Museums, Sustainability and Well-being". Zhao Feng, a member of the ICOM executive board, said the poster is closely linked to this theme, which focuses on global health and well-being, climate action and life on land.

*See **Museums**, page 2*

Online

See more by scanning the code.

Nature on display

Primary school students learn about butterflies at a research institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Qingdao, Shandong province, on International Day for Biological Diversity, which fell on Monday. The theme of this year's biodiversity day was "From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity".

LIANG XIAOPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY **See story, page 3**

China remains one of the safest nations

By CAO YIN

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China remains one of the safest countries in the world, as it has long been among nations with the lowest crime rates, and the rate of serious violent offenses in the country has been on a continuous decline in recent decades, according to a report.

In the past 20 years, crimes of intentional homicide, robbery and abduction have been constantly dropping across the country. The number of people accused of such crimes decreased by 67.7 percent last year compared with 2003, according to the report issued recently by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Law.

It revealed that the number of defendants convicted of serious violent crimes decreased to 56,800 in 2021 from 95,700 in 2013.

In addition, offenses involving firearms were down 21 percent year-on-year in 2022, while those involving explosives declined 19 percent, the report said.

"These figures have shown that such crimes in China remain low, indicating that Chinese people's sense of security is at a high level," said Zhang Zhigang, an associate research fellow at the institute who heads the team that compiled the report.

The country has also increased legal protection for women and children, Zhang said.

In March last year, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the National Health Commission and the All-China Women's Federation jointly launched a campaign to fight the crime of abducting and trafficking women and children.

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INSIDE

Russia accuses G7 Summit of undermining global stability

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VISIT…

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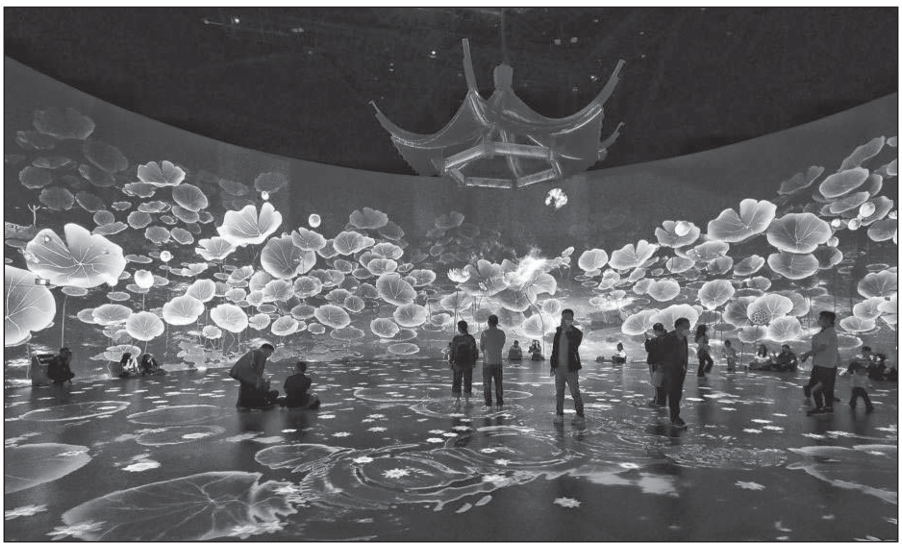
PAGE TWO



Left: An exhibition on the Maritime Silk Road opens at the Fujian Museum in Fuzhou, Fujian province, on Thursday to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. LI HE / XINHUA
Right: Visitors to the China Grand Canal Museum in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, enjoy scenes from the canal during a digital display on Wednesday. SHI BAIRONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Museums: Positive change being fostered

From page 1

Museums worldwide have attached greater importance to sustainability in the past two years. Last year, "Museums foster diversity and sustainability" was added to such institutions' role at the 26th International Council of Museums General Conference in Prague, Czech Republic.

ICOM said: "Museums are key contributors to the well-being and sustainable development of our communities. As trusted institutions and important threads in our shared social fabric, they are uniquely placed to create a cascading effect to foster positive change."

International Museum Day was launched by ICOM in 1977. Every year since 2009, China has chosen a major venue to stage nationwide activities to celebrate the day. Fujian Museum in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian province, was the main venue this year, playing host to exhibitions, academic forums, light shows and many other activities last week.

Li Qun, director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China, said Fujian used to be an important starting point for the ancient Maritime Silk Road. Quanzhou city, Fujian, a center of maritime trade during the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties, was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2021, with the attribution "Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China".

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. To commemorate the occasion, the exhibition *Good Fortune Sails Across the World: The Cultural Hallmarks of the Maritime Silk Road* opened at the Fujian Museum on Thursday.

The exhibition features 295 artifacts from the ancient Maritime Silk Road loaned by 35 cultural institutions and museums in China, including the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Shanghai Museum, and the China Maritime Museum in Shanghai.

A highlight of the display is a model *fuchuan*, also known as the Fujian vessel, one of the four types of ancient wooden sailing boats in China. With its flat deck, V-shaped hull, good stability in the water, and large capacity, the *fuchuan* was often used as a cargo vessel after the Song Dynasty.

Gold ingot

Yang Jingbin, an associate researcher at the Fujian Museum, said that when Chinese navigator Zheng He from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) made his seven westward voyages, his fleets mainly comprised Fujian vessels.

Also on display is an inscribed gold ingot weighing nearly 2 kilograms unearthed from the tomb of Zhu Zhanji, a son of emperor Zhu Gaochi (1378-1425) in the Ming Dynasty. The inscription states that the raw material for the ingot was bought overseas by Zheng during his fifth voyage.

Left: Schoolchildren in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, visit the city's museum. JIANG HUA / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Experts evaluate cultural relics in Lanxi, Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Below left:** Virtual reality lenses are used to present cultural relics in Beijing. CHEN ZHONGHAO / XINHUA **Below right:** Children learn about the city's past at a museum in Fuzhou. ZHENG SHUAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

"It is the only artifact to date with a clear inscription that shows it is related to Zheng's voyage. It was given as a gift to Zhu Zhanji to mark his engagement," Yang said.

The exhibition also features a variety of porcelain, silk and teas, which used to be major export commodities.

Such artifacts provide clues to cultural links. For example, a blue-and-white porcelain candlestick from the Ming Dynasty is highly similar to a bronze candlestick from West Asia in the 14th century.

"It shows the mutual influence of both cultures, reflecting the harmonious symbiosis of ancient times," Yang said.

White porcelain made in Dehua county, Fujian, was a highly important commodity shipped overseas. To illustrate its history, an exhibition of Dehua white ceramics has also opened at the Fujian Museum.

Bai Ming, a professor at Tsinghua University's Academy of Arts and Design, said white ceramics from Dehua have long been known as top-grade Chinese porcelain, as they were shipped overseas in ancient times. In the West, they were known by the French in the 19th century as Blanc de Chine, or "white from China".

> "Such activities enable me to give full play to my specialist knowledge to help those who love collections."
>
> **Liang Xiuhua,** an expert in evaluating ancient paintings and calligraphy in Zhejiang province

In the Song Dynasty, the Dehua Kiln began to prosper from maritime trade, and in the late Ming and early Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, white porcelain became a highly prized commodity from the kiln.

Huang Weiwei, a guide at the exhibition, said customized white porcelain was shipped overseas at the start of the Ming Dynasty.

Two white ceramic statues of Adam and Eve are believed to be examples of such products. The statues, produced by the Dehua Kiln, are now stored at the Fujian Museum.

"It seems that Chinese artisans made such statues based on their imagination. Although the figures depicted by the statues are half-naked, they are very different from those made overseas. Their movements seem to be restricted, as if they don't know where to put their hands, and they look as though they want to hide their semi-naked bodies," Huang said.

"There are few historical records about ancient craftspeople in China, but through their work we gain a glimpse of how they reacted to Western culture and their understanding of this culture."

Quick response

Similar statues are housed in the collections of many European museums, including the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Huang said.

When the exhibitions opened at the Fujian Museum on Thursday, industry professionals attending a forum enthusiastically expressed their ideas for the sustainability of museums.

Zhao said that after the draft resolution Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was issued by the UN in 2015, the museum sector responded quickly, and in 2018, ICOM established a working group on sustainability.

The principle of sustainability features in ICOM's strategic plan for 2022-28, the themes for International Museum Day for several years, and the revised plan for the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums.

ICOM President Emma Nardi said in a video message to the International Museum Day celebrations in Fuzhou, "This demonstrates the resolve to make our professional contribution to implement the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN and to make a better world for human civilization."

Gu Yucai, deputy director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, said sustainability requires museums to put forward the idea of coexistence between humans and nature through their exhibitions. Such institutions should also develop in a green and low-carbon manner by saving energy and reducing emissions.

Li, the administration's director, said one of the biggest costs involved in managing a museum is energy consumption. The administration aims to make Suzhou Museum in Jiangsu province a test site to promote the green and low-carbon development of museums.

Zhao cited the Shanghai Museum of Glass, which decades ago was the site of a factory producing glassware, as a good example of applying the principle of sustainable development in its establishment and operation.

He said the area in which the museum is located used to be home to old industries and abandoned factories, so the environment was not good. However, when the museum was established, environmental improvements took place.

Local residents were granted free admission to the museum, and attended lectures on the importance of the environment and protecting biodiversity. They were also invited to take part in an initiative to improve the diversity of local flowers and other plants to attract more pollinating insects to return to the area.

"In this way, the local environment is improving. I think the museum project is a complete restoration project, which will bring a big change to the entire community," Zhao said.

More activities have been held in museums nationwide, including the provision of public services for evaluating cultural relics.

For example, on Wednesday, Zhejiang Provincial Museum organized such an activity in Lanxi, Zhejiang. Specialists in porcelain, jade, ancient paintings and calligraphy were invited to answer questions and help evaluate collections.

Liang Xiuhua, an expert in evaluating ancient paintings and calligraphy, said: "Such activities enable me to give full play to my specialist knowledge to help those who love collections. In this way, we meet the public's requirements and contribute to the collection of folk artifacts and development of the artifact market."

Wang Kaihao contributed to this story.

Beijing symposium sheds modern light on efforts to showcase the past

By LIN QI
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Visitors flocked to museums during the May Day holiday for leisure and educational purposes.

A rough calculation by the National Cultural Heritage Administration shows that about 50 million people visited museums nationwide during this period.

Top-ranked exhibitions are being staged in China, including a selection of self-portraits from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy, at the National Museum of China in Beijing.

A display of masterpieces from the National Gallery in London, which closed on May 7 at the Shanghai Museum, was open to the public for 24 hours that day.

Such exhibitions have triggered discussion on ways to diversify museum services and to deeply integrate the management of museums into a city's policy design and urban development.

A recent symposium attended by policy makers, museum administrators, museology researchers and urban planners from home and abroad looked at the prospect of Beijing evolving as "a city of museums", which the municipal government has envisioned and is striving to achieve. The Chinese capital is blessed with a rich history, cultural heritage and modern institutions.

The 2023 International Symposium of the Think Tank for Beijing Cultural Heritage and Museums Development, held in the city on May 10, was an important part of the ongoing inaugural Beijing Museum Activity Month.

Launched on May 1, the month is being marked with some 300 exhibitions — physical and online — to introduce audiences to Beijing's diverse cultural and artistic resources, and to encourage the public to come up with ideas for developing creative museum products.

Beijing's draft development plan for museum construction from this year to 2025 states that the capital has ambitions to become "a city of museums", with two such institutions for every 100,000 people.

Liu Shuguang, director-general of the Chinese Museums Association, said at the symposium that city administrators in China first realized the importance of museums to the image branding of a city in the first decade of the 21st century.

However, at the time, there was a lack of overall planning for building museums as an integral part of urban development. The ensuing years have seen an improvement, with more attention paid to interaction between a museum and its host city, and ways in which museums blend in with their neighborhoods.

Liu said that to give museums a cultural identity, urban planners should work to achieve "unity of a city's history, cultural heritage and its modern landscapes", to accentuate its "temperament and spirit" that have formed over time. He said an effective coordination mechanism should also be introduced for all museums.

He added that major museums are essential to a city's cultural landscape. "Their presence as a channel of public diplomacy is necessary, and forming consistent, institutionalized connections with international counterparts helps raise a city's global profile," Liu said.

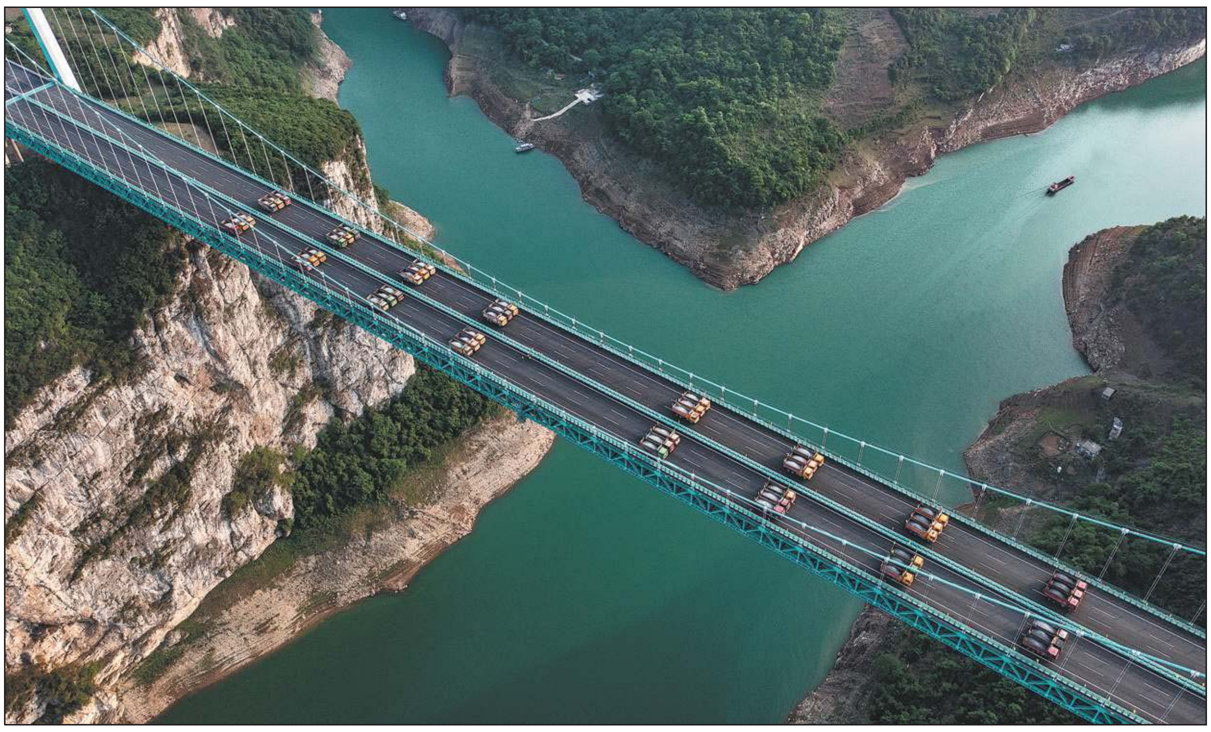
Chen Mingjie, head of the Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau, said building a "city of museums" calls for related resources to be integrated with many aspects of city construction and urban life. Such aspects include forming a close connection with schools and communities, and sharing research on museum collections to provide the public with more access to cultural resources.

Participants at the symposium spoke of the need for ideas to "think globally and act locally", and for museums to hold discussions with the authorities in their home cities.

An Laishun, who chairs the International Council of Museums' Asia-Pacific Alliance, cited the opening of the Shanghai Museum of Glass as a good example of a modern museum with a diverse program being built on the former site of a glassware factory. The institution reflects Shanghai's transformation in the post-industrial era, An added.

TOP NEWS

Bridge faces load test



The Jinfeng Wujiang River Bridge in southwest China's Guizhou province is seen under static load testing on Sunday. Static load testing, including symmetrical and asymmetrical rounds, was conducted on the 1473.5-meter-long bridge, which is a key project on the Guiyang-Jinsha-Gulin expressway. TAO LIANG / XINHUA

Nation's effort to safeguard biodiversity pays dividends

Population of many endangered species of flora, fauna sees growth in recent years

By LI HONGYANG
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China's efforts to protect habitats and biodiversity have contributed to the increase in the population of many endangered species, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said on Monday, the 23rd International Day for Biological Diversity.

The day falls on May 22 annually, and this year's theme is "From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity".

The administration said that since the beginning of the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), more than 300 rare and endangered wildlife and plant species, including Siberian tigers and orchids, have seen their numbers rise.

Over the years, the distribution area of the Siberian tiger has expanded from the Changbai Mountains to the Greater and Lesser Hinggan Mountains, and there is a wild population of around 60.

Meanwhile, the distribution area of the crested ibis has expanded from three to seven provinces, with a wild population of more than 7,000, the administration said.

It added that the number of Qiaojia pine trees has also grown from 34 in the 1990s to more than 3,000.

To further protect these endangered species, China aims to establish an extensive system of national parks across the country that will cover more than 110 million hectares, about 10.3 percent of the country's land area, the administration said.

By 2025, the country aims to protect 75 percent of national key terrestrial endangered wildlife species and 80 percent of national key terrestrial endangered plant species, the administration said.

Such an example of habitat conservation can be found at Wuyishan National Park, located in Fujian and Jiangxi provinces.

The park, covering an area of about 128,000 hectares and home to more than 10,000 species of flora and fauna, has found a way to maintain harmony between local residents and the area's wildlife.

The park has dedicated 10 percent of its area to eco-friendly industries, while the remaining 90 percent is devoted to protecting biodiversity.

This approach has led to the growth of green industries, such as tea production, tourism and bamboo cultivation, leading to economic growth while also conserving the environment, said the park's management bureau.

Local residents have benefited from this model by engaging in eco-friendly tourism and conservation work, and the park has created job opportunities for them. More than 1,600 villagers are employed in positions including hiking tour guides and park maintenance staff.

These conservation efforts have also had a positive influence on the surrounding communities.

Zhan Jianying, a resident of Aotou village in the hinterland of the park, said that "without these good mountains and waters, we wouldn't have such good tea. If we want to continue to enjoy the benefits of these natural resources, we must protect them".

Report: Women get greater support in more fields

From page 1

By September, more than 900 such cases were solved and over 1,340 suspects captured, according to the report.

It cited data showing that 717 people were charged with the crime from January to September last year, with 234 others accused of buying the abducted women and children.

To give stronger support for women in more fields, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, adopted in October an amendment to the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women, the report said. Furthermore, judicial agencies have prioritized a crackdown on the sexual assault of children.

In addition, the report hailed the country's greater efforts in recent years in fighting telecommunications and online fraud as well as corruption. The fight against related crimes will be further strengthened in the next two or three years, according to the report.

More cases concerning money laundering will be handled, as fugitive capture and asset recovery work intensifies, the report said.

Moreover, it said that judicial action against crimes such as spying and theft of State secrets will be enhanced to better guarantee national security, following a revision to the Counter-Espionage Law, which was adopted in April by the NPC Standing Committee and will take effect on July 1.

Book on oracle bones published

By WANG KAIHAO
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The Forbidden City, China's imperial palace from 1420 to 1911, which is now officially known as the Palace Museum, is not just famous for its extensive collection of royal relics and its unique architecture but is also a treasure trove of archaic characters.

After a decade of study and preparation, the museum announced on Monday that it was releasing a multivolume book on some of the 3,300-year-old oracle bone inscriptions in its collection.

The recently published first two volumes of the book, *Yinxu Oracle Bone Inscriptions in Palace Museum Collection*, cover more than 1,300 bones, the inscriptions on which include topics ranging from military affairs, astronomy and agriculture to tribute systems and sacrificial rituals.

This is the first time in decades that China's largest museum has decided to make public details about its oracle bone collection through a book.

Dating to the late Shang Dynasty (c.16th century to 11th century BC), oracle bones — inscribed turtle shells and ox scapulas, among others — were mainly excavated from the Yinxu Ruins site in Anyang, Henan province. The script comprised the earliest-known, fully developed Chinese writing system whose lineage is the same as the Chinese characters used today.

In 2017, the inscriptions were included in the International Memory of the World Register, administered by UNESCO, which seeks to identify items of documentary heritage that have worldwide significance.

In 2019, President Xi Jinping praised the oracle bone inscriptions, saying they represent the roots of fine traditional Chinese culture, in a congratulatory letter to mark the 120th anniversary of their discovery.

Zhu Hongwen, deputy director of the Palace Museum, said the museum houses 21,395 oracle bones, about 13 percent of the world's total number of such relics known to exist today.

Although this is the third-largest collection of oracle bones among institutions, after the National Library of China and Taipei-based Academia Sinica, about 80 percent of these bones were never categorized. It was the world's last big collection of oracle bones that had largely remained untouched.

The Palace Museum used to be a hub for oracle bone studies. However, after veteran scholars died, inheritors of this crucial and difficult discipline remained absent at the institution for about three decades after 1981. Finally, in 2013, scholars at the Palace Museum began to categorize and study the oracle bones to resume the course.

According to Wang Su, a researcher at the Palace Museum who has led the ongoing oracle bone studies, the recently published volumes focus on bones that were collected by Ma Heng, former director of the museum, and Xie Boshu, an entrepreneur and a paleographer.

Pictures and stone-rubbing replicas of each piece of oracle bone, along with explanatory notes, have been included in the book.

"We have also named every bone to indicate its nature and content, and thus facilitate further research. For the first time, the collection of oracle bones features catalogs like regular books," Wang said.

Previously, oracle bones only had serial numbers. Liu Yiman, a veteran oracle bone researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said: "Sorting files properly is the key for academic breakthrough. New materials can broaden our horizons."

The book on the Palace Museum's oracle bone collection can provide references for studies on warfare during the Shang Dynasty, and on a rare recording of a solar eclipse, Liu added.

In 2020, a comprehensive academic project was co-launched by the Ministry of Education and other national-level authorities to highlight the importance of paleography in inheriting and developing the Chinese civilization.

"Exploring the thoughts and cultural meanings hidden in the oracle bone inscriptions is the main work in this project," said Liu Hong, deputy director of the Ministry of Education's language information management department. "By figuring out cultural symbols of the past, we can better trace the origins of our civilization."

The Palace Museum also released its first essay collection on paleography on Monday. Besides the oracle bones, the museum houses about 1,600 inscribed bronze wares from the Shang and Zhou (c.11th century to 256 BC) dynasties.

US urged to be sincere in relations with China

By ZHOU JIN
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China urged the United States to show sincerity in bilateral communication and take practical steps to bring China-US relations back to the right track, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Monday.

Mao made the remarks after US President Joe Biden said on Sunday that he expected ties with China to improve "very shortly", dismissing an alleged "spy balloon" incident that caused a diplomatic spat earlier this year as "silly".

Biden said that his administration is considering lifting sanctions on Defense Minister Li Shangfu, removing one barrier to a potential meeting with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

Beijing and Washington have maintained necessary communication, Mao told a regular news conference. She added that China firmly opposes any illegal and unilateral sanctions, and has expressed its solemn stance on this to the US side.

"If, on the one hand, the US asks for communication, yet on the other, suppresses and contains China by every possible means, and imposes sanctions on Chinese officials, institutions and companies, what is the sincerity and meaning of such communication?" she asked.

The US should roll back sanctions immediately, overcome the obstacles and create favorable conditions for dialogue, she said.

Mao urged the US to correct its perception of China, and stop interfering in China's internal affairs and undermining China's sovereignty, security and development interests.

Also on Monday, the Foreign Ministry welcomed a decision by the World Health Assembly on refusing Taiwan's participation in this year's assembly, urging relevant countries to stop politicizing health issues and stop using the Taiwan question to interfere in China's internal affairs.

The General Committee and the Plenary Session of the 76th WHA have decided to reject the so-called proposal of "inviting Taiwan to participate in the WHA as an observer" submitted by certain countries. This year's annual assembly runs from May 21 through May 30.

The decision fully shows that the one-China principle has international support and represents the prevailing trend that cannot be challenged, the ministry said in a statement.

In disregard of the well-being of the people of Taiwan, the Democratic Progressive Party authorities put countries having so-called "diplomatic ties" with Taiwan up to making the proposal, while certain countries encouraged and supported this move, it said.

These egregious acts deliberately violated international rules and have been unanimously opposed by countries that uphold justice, the statement added.

Before the opening of the conference, nearly 100 countries expressed their commitment to the one-China principle and opposition to Taiwan's participation in the assembly by sending letters to the World Health Organization and issuing statements, it said.

China urges certain countries not to pretend to be confused, and stop the erroneous practice of using Taiwan to contain China, the ministry said.

Ma Xiaoguang, a spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, urged the DPP authorities to stop political manipulation on Taiwan-related issues in the WHO, saying that any actions that challenge the one-China principle are doomed to fail.

Modern farming

Technicians carry out maintenance of mechanized rotary rakes on Monday in Huaibei, Anhui province, as the agricultural department of the local government prepares for the upcoming wheat harvest season. WAN SHANCHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Security: Export restrictions 'not in interest of any party'

From page 1

The move could profoundly affect Micron's business in China, a market accounting for around 11 percent of its $30.8 billion global sales in 2022, said Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecom industry association.

"Chinese State-owned enterprises and their affiliates, at least, will stop buying Micron's products. And it could have a broader impact given the clear signal from the statement that Micron's products have cybersecurity risks," said a senior executive of a market research company, on condition of anonymity.

Companies in the Chinese market have already started to avoid buying Micron's products since the government announced in March that the company was the subject of a cybersecurity review, the source added.

Micron said in a statement on Monday that it had received notification of the review result and is assessing the next steps.

Huatai Securities and CITIC Securities both said in research notes that the move will boost demand for the products of Chinese companies such as Yangtze Memory Technologies Corp and South Korean companies such as Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix.

Micron is the world's third-largest maker of DRAM, or dynamic random access memory chips, which are flash memory chips widely used in smartphones, personal computers and servers.

Micron accounted for 22.8 percent of the global DRAM market in 2021, behind Samsung's 43.6 percent and SK Hynix's 27.7 percent, according to market research company IC Insights.

The Financial Times reported in April that Washington had urged South Korean officials to prevent its chipmakers from filling the market void if Micron was unable to sell its chips to China.

Mao from the Foreign Ministry said on Monday that such moves by the US are aimed at safeguarding its own hegemonic interests.

"Coercing other countries to impose export restrictions on China seriously violates the principles of the market economy and international trade rules. … It is not in the interest of any party," Mao said.

Wei Shaojun, a professor of integrated circuits at Tsinghua University, said the reported export restrictions would further accelerate the development of the domestic memory chip sector.

"China's semiconductor industry is on the rise, with an annual investment of nearly $30 billion," Wei said, adding that China is also the world's largest semiconductor market.

CHINA

Court blocks compulsory TV ads

Manufacturers ordered to give option for consumers to switch off commercials

By CAO YIN
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Smart television manufacturers and sellers must provide consumers with an option to turn off advertisements inserted in the devices to protect their rights and interests, China's top court said.

The Supreme People's Court made the remark on Monday in the country's first release of a public interest case concerning smart TVs, clarifying that consumers have the right to choose or reject products or services.

In the case, the Jiangsu Consumer Council filed a lawsuit against an electronics company, claiming that a 15-second advertisement, which was automatically played when smart TVs sold by the company were turned on, infringed upon consumers' rights.

The council asked the company to offer consumers an option to disable the ad, saying that they should not be forced to watch it every time they turned on their TVs. After the enterprises failed to correct the problem, the council sued it.

In November 2020, the Nanjing Intermediate People's Court in Jiangsu found in favor of the council, ordering the company to provide an option for consumers to disable the ad, stressing in the verdict that consumers have the right to choose or reject the service.

In March 2021, the Jiangsu High People's Court upheld the original ruling after the company appealed.

"Even though the ad was just 15 seconds, it violated the legitimate rights of consumers and also affected the healthy development of the smart TV industry," Qi Su, deputy chief judge of the top court's Third Circuit Court, said while briefing about the case on Monday.

"The dispute resolution has shown the principle of upholding a people-centered approach in our judicial affairs, and how we responded to public concerns with efficient case handling," she added.

On Monday, the top court also disclosed 15 other cases resolved by courts in the Yangtze River Delta, noting that the move aims to unify trial standards and serve its high-quality development by the rule of law.

The cases cover various aspects — including those involving internet platforms, environmental protection, intellectual property and finance — reflecting the major developing sectors in the delta.

Lauding the judicial fight against illegal fishing and the purchase of fry in the river by effectively solving relevant public interest litigation, Qi called for judges to continue to make stronger efforts to protect the environment by strictly implementing the Yangtze River Protection Law.

She highlighted the importance of dealing with commercial disputes across the delta, adding that better handling of such cases can prevent financial risks and maintain stability in this regard.

Qi said it is necessary to regularly disclose influential cases, as that will help judges in Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui unify trial standards, as well as contribute to meeting the public's legal demands.

Mainland tours resume for residents of Taiwan

By CUI JIA
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Allowing travel agencies to resume organizing group tours for Taiwan residents who want to visit the Chinese mainland will help expand cross-Strait exchanges and ease tensions, an expert on Taiwan affairs said.

The decision to resume such tours starting on Friday was announced by Ma Xiaoguang, a spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council.

Such trips had been suspended since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taiwan people are welcome to come for sightseeing and to witness the development of the mainland, he added.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism echoed Ma's statement, adding that local authorities are required to better assist tour operators with organizing such trips.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, called for the gradual resumption and expansion of cross-Strait exchanges during the annual work conference on Taiwan affairs held by mainland authorities on May 9 and 10.

Wang, who is also chairman of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body, added that efforts will be made to make friends with people from all walks of life in Taiwan and promote mutual understanding between people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Zhu Songling, a professor at Beijing Union University's Institute of Taiwan Studies, said on Friday that the resumption of group tours for Taiwan residents is the latest move from mainland authorities to expand cross-Strait exchanges.

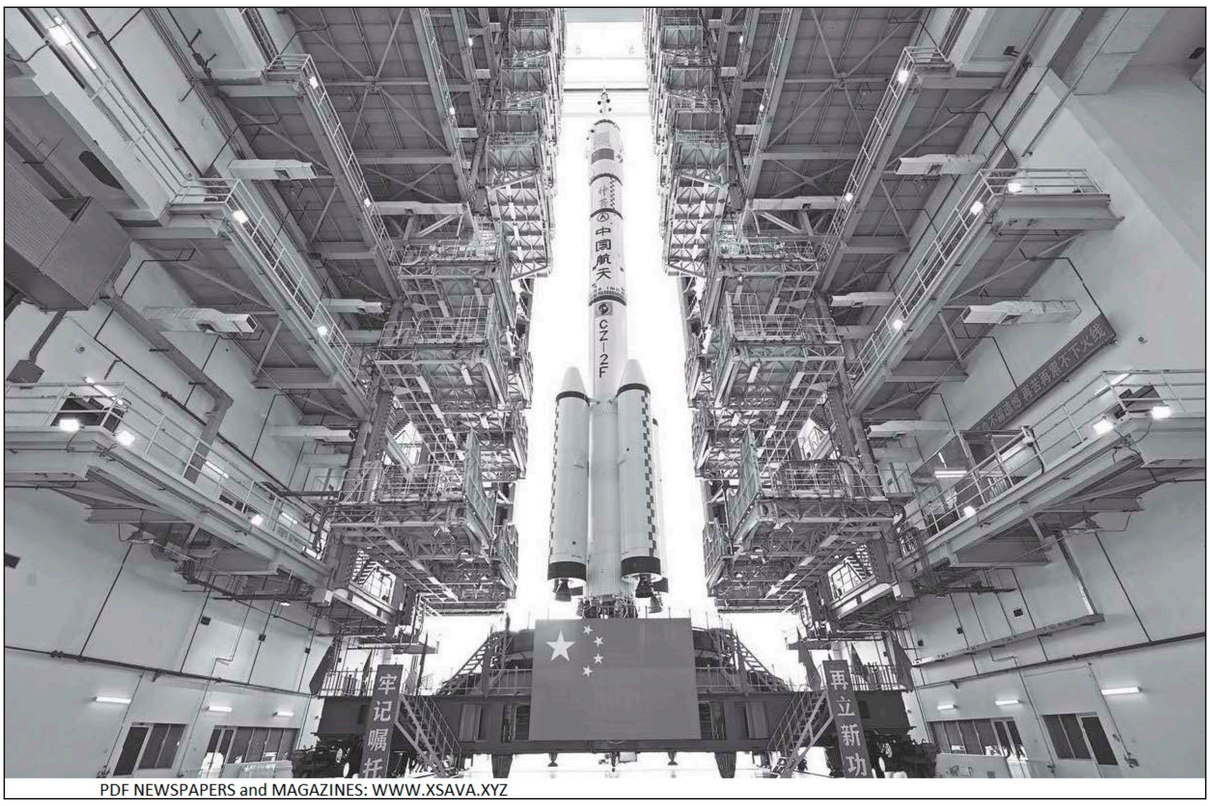
"It also sends a signal that the mainland hopes to ease tensions across the Taiwan Strait and pursue peaceful development," Zhu said.

While meeting a delegation of tour operators from Taiwan on Thursday afternoon, Song Tao, head of the Taiwan Work Office of the CPC Central Committee and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said that peaceful development can be achieved across the Taiwan Strait if people adhere to the 1992 Consensus and stand against "Taiwan independence". As long as there is peace and stability, cross-Strait tourism can be resumed.

Hsiao Po-jen, head of the delegation and chairman of the Taiwan Association of Travel Agents, said tour operators always hope for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. People on both sides have the same roots and are part of a community with a shared future.

"Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people in Taiwan weren't able to visit the mainland during the past three years. The association plans to enable more Taiwan people to see the beautiful sights on the mainland and gain a better understanding of it," Hsiao said.

According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Chinese mainland received 6.13 million visits from Taiwan residents in 2019.



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The Shenzhou XVI spacecraft and its carrier, a Long March 2F rocket, are moved to their launch site at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China's Gobi Desert on Monday. WANG JIANGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Shenzhou XVI mission to launch in days

By ZHAO LEI
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China's next manned mission, the Shenzhou XVI, is scheduled to be launched in the coming days to transport three astronauts to the Tiangong space station, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

The Shenzhou XVI crewed spacecraft and its carrier, a Long March 2F rocket, were moved to the service tower on Monday at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China's Gobi Desert, the agency said in a news release, adding that the spacecraft and the rocket will undergo final checks in the next several days.

The Shenzhou XVI will become the first crewed mission to visit Tiangong this year and the first to arrive since its construction was completed by the Shenzhou XIV and XV crews.

The crew members, whose names have yet to be disclosed, will take over the massive orbital outpost from their peers in the Shenzhou XV — mission commander Major General Fei Junlong, Senior Colonel Deng Qingming and Senior Colonel Zhang Lu — who arrived on Nov 30. By the end of May, Fei's team will have stayed in orbit for six months.

Pang Zhihao, an expert on space exploration technology and a renowned writer on spaceflight, predicts that the Shenzhou XVI crew will include new faces — the country's third generation of astronauts.

"I think there will be a scientist or an engineer on the crew, and this means the Shenzhou XVI will be the first time for Chinese civilians to travel into space," he said.

Yang Liwei, the first Chinese person in space and now a deputy chief planner of the country's manned spaceflights, has said that the third-generation astronauts are expected to be in space in 2023.

As of now, all of the Chinese astronauts who have been on spaceflights are members of the People's Liberation Army. They are in the first two generations of astronauts who were selected from experienced Air Force aviators.

The third generation of astronauts have civilians recruited from researchers and engineers.

There are 17 men and one woman in this generation in three groups: seven spacecraft pilots, another seven as spaceflight engineers and the last four as payload specialists.

Earlier this month, the Tianzhou 6 robotic cargo spaceship set out from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province to transport materials for the next manned missions, becoming the first spacecraft to visit the Tiangong space station this year.

Orbiting about 400 kilometers above the ground, the Tiangong currently consists of three major components, the Tianhe core module and Wentian and Mengtian science lab modules, and is connected with two visiting craft, the Shenzhou XV crew ship and the Tianzhou 6 cargo ship.

Scientists set out on study trip to Mt Qomolangma

Chinese scientists have started a scientific expedition to the region of Mount Qomolangma, known as Mount Everest in the West, in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region, as part of the second comprehensive scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

A total of 170 scientists are conducting research on water, ecology and human activities, aiming to reveal the mechanism of environmental change and optimize the ecological security barrier system on the plateau.

Dubbed the "roof of the world" and the "water tower of Asia", the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is an important ecological security barrier in China. It is also a natural laboratory for conducting research on the evolution of the Earth and life, the interaction among spheres and the relationship between man and Earth.

According to the law on ecological conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the State encourages and supports scientific investigation and research on the plateau, and promotes long-term research to grasp the ecological background of the plateau and its changes.

As an important part of the second comprehensive scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, which was initiated in 2017, the ongoing expedition is of great significance to studying the impact of climate and environmental change in the Qomolangma region on other parts of the world.

The 2023 Qomolangma expedition will continue to focus on major scientific issues such as how the extremely high altitude environment changes under the influence of global warming, how environmental change interacts with the westerly winds and monsoons, and how the environment will affect the changes of the "water tower of Asia", according to Yao Tandong, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and team leader of the expedition.

"The Qomolangma expedition has realized the transformation from 'I want to conquer you' to 'I want to understand you', achieved the application of new technologies and new means, and resulted in important international influence," he said.

A series of scientific achievements including "the synergy and influence of westerly winds and monsoons", "the special physiological response of the human body in the Qomolangma region" and "the ecological process of the greening of the Qomolangma region" have been made so far during the second comprehensive scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

XINHUA

Universal childcare services to provide key support

By YAO YUXIN and CANG WEI
in Taizhou, Jiangsu

Jiang Ming, a resident of Taizhou, Jiangsu province, decided to enroll his 32-month-old daughter in a local childcare center four months ago, recognizing the great support it would provide to his family.

Like the majority of families in China, both he and his wife have to work, leaving their child in the care of elderly relatives during the day. However, as the grandparents grew older, taking care of the child became increasingly challenging, Jiang said, but having his wife quit her job and stay at home full time would disconnect her from society, potentially straining the family relationship.

Like Jiang, this dilemma is being faced by many families in China, especially with the introduction of the three-child policy in 2021. According to data released by the National Health Commission, more than 30 percent of families with infants and young children in China have a demand for childcare services, but the enrollment rate is only around 5.5 percent.

Jia You Er Nyu (Home with Kids), where Jiang sends his daughter, solves his urgent need. With a monthly fee of 2,080 yuan ($295), plus an additional 500 yuan for meals, he drops off his daughter at the childcare center at 8:20 am and picks her up at 4 pm on weekdays.

The temporary separation also makes the family cherish the time they spend together in the evenings and on weekends even more. "It largely alleviates the burden of parenting and promotes family harmony," the father said.

This is a microcosm of the national efforts to develop universal childcare services. According to the 2021 decision on improving birth policies to promote long-term balanced population growth, the country will provide subsidies and increase the number of childcare slots for infants and young children aged 0-3 years from 1.8 to 4.5 slots per thousand people by 2025.

"It can help alleviate fertility anxieties and reduce the cost of childrearing," said Mu Guangzong, a professor of demography at the Institute of Population Research at Peking University. "It will address the low fertility rates resulting from a lack of willingness or desire to have children."

At Jia You Er Nyu, a provincial model nursery that provides universal childcare services, there is an average of one teacher for every six children. They engage the kids in activities such as reading picture books, planting potatoes and exploring nature in a nearby park.

"Our teachers act as guides and observers, rather than commanders," said Zhou Lihua, head of the day nursery. "We observe the children's interests and provide them with ample freedom."

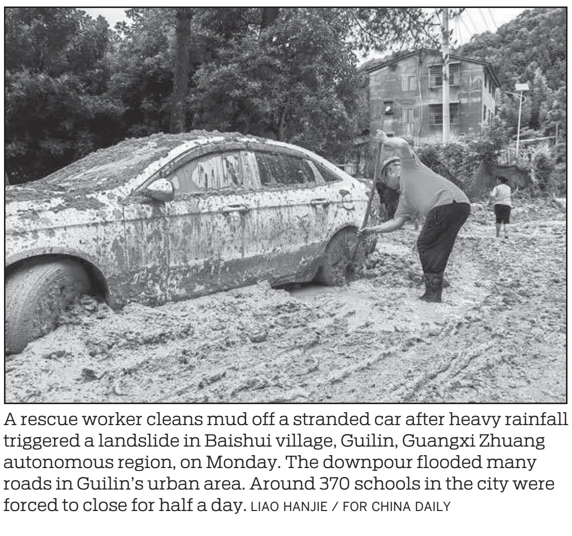
Zhou Lixia is a mother of a three-and-a-half-year-old boy who has been in the childcare center for a year and a half. She was surprised by the teachers' awareness of the different sensitive periods for children.

The teacher told her that at one point, her child displayed a heightened sensitivity to colors, while at another time, there was a strong affinity for shapes. Recognizing this, the family concentrated on cultivating their child with these abilities accordingly. Now the boy performs well in painting and puzzle solving.

Because of limited interaction with her child during the daytime, the working mother said that without the teacher's reminder, the family might have overlooked these development stages.

Contact the writers at yaoyuxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Stuck in the mud



A rescue worker cleans mud off a stranded car after heavy rainfall triggered a landslide in Baishui village, Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Monday. The downpour flooded many roads in Guilin's urban area. Around 370 schools in the city were forced to close for half a day. LIAO HANJIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

CHINA

Central catalog details elderly care services

Local authorities' offerings to seniors must not be fewer than those listed

By LI LEI
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Central authorities have published a catalog of care services and cash subsidies to create a safety net targeting the country's fast-expanding elderly population.

The listed items range from stipends for residents aged 80 and older outside their monthly pension benefits, to reimbursements for courses that people take to better care for their elderly relatives who have disabilities.

On the list are also programs that help adapt the home layout to promote physical accessibility, and visits paid to "empty-nest elders" living alone by community workers and volunteers.

The catalog is an appendix to a guideline issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, China's Cabinet.

The content is subject to change based on new situations, it said. However, the catalog in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) mainly focuses on addressing problems facing families with disabled relatives in old age, as well as those dealing with elders without caregivers.

Local authorities are required to roll out their customized versions based on local conditions, but services on offer must not be fewer than those listed in the central guideline.

Titled "Opinions on Promoting the Construction of a Basic Eldercare Service System", the document defines basic elder care services as those offered by the State directly or indirectly, and are basic, universally accessible, and aim to meet the most bottom-line needs.

"Such public products are the foundation for achieving the outlook that all people have something to rely on in old age," it said.

Building a system of such services is an important step by the central government in addressing the challenges brought about by the fast-aging demographics in a preemptive fashion, and was part of a broader move to curb the regional gap in the distribution of public services, it added. Wealthier provinces in the east usually offer better public services than inland regions.

The directive comes as China races to create an elder care service program that is both universally accessible and sustainable in supporting vast numbers of retirees.

National Bureau of Statistics data showed that China had 280 million people aged 60 and older as of last year, representing about 19 percent of the population.

The guideline also spells out a number of key tasks.

One is to establish a system to survey the health conditions of older residents, and the results need to be recognized across regions. Another is to roll out incentives to encourage property management companies to participate in relevant programs.

As part of the effort to shore up the capacity to provide elder care, the guideline said newly built residential communities must complete a certain number of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities based on their scale, and renovations targeting older communities must take elder care needs into consideration.

Elderly people interact with a robot at an elderly care center in Zhengzhou, Henan province, last month. ZHANG TAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hard choices

A university staff member details prospects on admission and future employment to visitors at a consultation fair in Beijing on Sunday. Some 60 colleges participated in the event to answer queries from visitors, most of whom were parents of children preparing for the national college entrance exam in less than three weeks. LIU PING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Expo sets platform for cooperation between China and Arab nations

By XU WEIWEI
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The China-Arab States Expo has become an important platform for China-Arab exchanges, and will expand high-quality cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative, said officials, diplomats and business leaders.

At a promotional event for the China-Arab States Expo in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday, speakers noted that the expo has played an active role in promoting not only economic and trade ties, but also cultural communication between China and the Arab world.

Guest speakers at the event included Liang Yanshun, Party chief of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region and chairman of the standing committee of Ningxia's people's congress; Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar bin Ibrahim Al Khorayef; Yin Lijun and Xie Qinsheng from the Chinese embassy in Saudi Arabia; Mohammed Abdulaziz Al Ajlan, chairman of the Saudi-Chinese Business Council, and Saudi business leaders Mohammed A. Al Ajlan and Ajlan A. Alajlan.

The sixth session of the expo will be held in Yinchuan, Ningxia, from Sept 21 to 24. Themed "New Era, New Opportunities, New Future", it will focus on the eight major cooperation initiatives between China and the Arab side and the five priority areas where China is ready to work with the Gulf countries in the next three to five years, Liang said.

The China-Arab States Expo is an international exposition jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce of China, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, and the government of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region. Since 2013, five sessions of the expo have been held in Yinchuan of Ningxia under the principle of "Friendship, Cooperation, and Win-win Development".

"We aim to deepen cooperation in fields such as trade and economy, energy, science and technology, and agriculture, and foster new growth drivers in areas including green and low-carbon development, digital economy, and health and medical services," Liang said.

The five expos over the decade have built bridges and created favorable conditions for economic and trade exchanges and cooperation between countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, including Arab countries, effectively promoted economic and trade exchanges between China and Arab countries, and promoted the vigorous development of China-Arab relations, he told guests while sincerely inviting Saudi businesses to participate.

Minister Al Khorayef expressed the will of Saudi Arabia to showcase its products, attractions and strength at the expo while relating its significance to bilateral exchanges.

Yin Lijun, charge d'affaires of the Chinese embassy in Saudi Arabia, said with Saudi Arabia's proactive participation and support, this expo will achieve greater success and inject strong impetus into the friendly cooperation between China and Saudi Arabia, and between China and other Arabian countries in the new era.

The expo is a major measure to implement the achievements of the "Three Summits" of China-Arabia, China-GCC and China-Saudi Arabia late last year.

Yin said Chinese diplomats in Saudi Arabia fully support Ningxia holding the sixth expo and enhancing the China-Saudi Arabia economic and trade exchanges and cooperation to a new level.

Mohammed Abdulaziz Al Ajlan, chairman of the Saudi-Chinese Business Council, expressed hope that the meeting would achieve its goals, highlighting the most important opportunities available to the private sector to increase the scale of trade and investment between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and China.

PowerChina Saudi representative Zhu Jing said that in recent years Chinese enterprises have been actively participating in the improvement of infrastructure, industrial development, technological progress, education and medical care in Saudi Arabia, helping to improve the living standards of local people.

Zhu noted PowerChina has been focusing on local employment and procurement, and has witnessed a steady rise in the proportion of Saudi employees and local products and services, advocating green and low-carbon operations, frequently donating funds to educational causes, and organizing vocational technical training for their employees.

"Meanwhile, we hope people from all walks of life in Saudi Arabia will continue to help, support and care about Chinese enterprises."

Hu Dongmei contributed to this story.

Maternity insurance coverage to be expanded

By WANG XIAOYU
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China will continue to expand the coverage of maternity insurance and explore the wider implementation of long-term care insurance as part of efforts to achieve balanced population development and address the rapidly aging society, the National Healthcare Insurance Administration said on Thursday.

Li Tao, deputy director of the administration, said that 240 million people had enrolled in China's maternity insurance program, and its fund paid maternity expenses worth 89.1 billion yuan ($12.7 billion) in total last year.

"The maternity insurance program helps balance expenditures resulting from hiring female workers, alleviate employers' concerns over recruiting women and mitigate gender discrimination at workplaces," she said during a news conference held by the State Council Information Office.

China permitted all couples to have up to three children, up from two, on May 31, 2021. Li said all provincial-level regions have so far released documents to guarantee that insured female employees can access fertility subsidies and other benefits when having a third child.

In July last year, the administration released a guideline with 16 other government departments that requires including flexible workers in local maternity insurance programs and exploring subsidizing labor pain relief and assisted reproductive services.

"We will continue to expand maternity insurance coverage, strengthen the reimbursement of medical expenditures involving childbearing ... so as to promote the long-term and balanced development of demography," she said.

By the end of last year, China had 280 million people aged 60 or above, accounting for 19.8 percent of its population, said Hu Jinglin, head of the administration.

To tackle an aging society and the rising number of elderly people with disabilities, Hu said that China began piloting long-term care insurance policies in 49 cities since 2016.

"By late 2022, 169 million people had enrolled in the program and a total of 62.4 billion yuan had been paid out," he said.

"The pilot program has effectively reduced the financial burden on families with elderly members with disabilities, promoted the development of elderly care services and offered job opportunities for caregivers," he said. "The number of caregivers in pilot regions has risen from 30,000 to 330,000."

Hu said that the administration will continue to carry out and improve pilot programs while formulating a long-range plan and uniform standards to facilitate the establishment of a national system for long-term elderly care this year.

Tissue-like cultured fish fillets developed in lab

HANGZHOU — Seafood is favored by many people for its taste and richness in various proteins, omega-3 fatty acids and micronutrients. However, the increasing human population, coupled with environmental stress and climate change, has led to the overexploitation of marine food resources in recent decades.

In response to this challenge, a team of Chinese researchers has been seeking to develop tissue-like cultured fish fillets for human consumption, combining fish muscle fibers and fat cells with 3D-printed gel.

The scientists from Zhejiang University and Dalian Polytechnic University published their findings recently in the Nature Partner Journal Science of Food.

They first isolated muscle stem cells and fat stem cells from the large yellow croaker, a warm-temperate migratory fish known for its delicious flavor and richness in nutrients.

Then a 3D scaffold with supporting materials for fish-cell adhesion and growth was constructed by using a gelatin-based gel. After proliferation and differentiation, the muscle scaffold was filled with cultured fish fat cells until the tissue-like fish fillets were formed.

The process of producing the fillets took 17 days. No obvious differences were noted between the cultured meats and native muscle tissues in terms of the proportions of muscle cells and fat cells, gumminess, resilience or springiness.

However, plenty of safety assessments are needed before the cell-cultured fish can be served to humans, according to the research team.

"The research offers potential possibilities for the future supply of meat and animal protein, and has important implications for the conservation of marine fish stocks," said Liu Donghong, a member of the research team.

XINHUA

'Frog' street vendors leap into online debate

By HE QI in Shanghai
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A recent video that showed a street vendor dressed as a frog and selling frog-shaped balloons being stopped by an urban patrol officer in Shanghai has stirred up a huge debate online. The vendor was asked to remove his frog costume for violating the city's regulations on running a business on the street without permission.

There have been other similar incidents. In April, traffic police stopped a vendor in the same outfit while riding an electric bicycle in Ningbo, Zhejiang province. The vendor was fined 20 yuan ($2.85) for not wearing a helmet. In March, another frog-disguised vendor was caught by an urban patrol officer in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province and was required to stand facing the wall to reflect on his illegal behavior.

Netizens, who've dubbed these vendors "frogs who sell their babies", praised them for their cute look and innovative approach to business. Some argued whether city patrol officers should show some mercy while others insisted that punishment should be imposed for violation of rules and regulations no matter what.

"It is indeed a form of selling toys," no matter the look and approach of the vendor, explained Xu Zhihu, director of the Shanghai Urban Patrol and Law Enforcement Bureau, in a program hosted by Shanghai Radio and Television Station on May 12. "In reality, they are individual stalls."

According to regulations implemented on Dec 1 in Shanghai, individuals and businesses are not allowed to set up stalls or sell goods in public places without authorization. But district and township governments are allowed to designate specific areas and times for stalls.

However, "frogs who sell their babies" are not in line with those regulations and could increase security risks in crowded areas or malls, Xu added.

"For those new business forms that have a relatively small impact on society, we generally advocate using verbal warnings or other educational methods," he said.

Ma Liang, a researcher at the National Academy of Development and Strategy at Renmin University of China, and a professor at the School of Public Management, suggested that a flexible law enforcement approach be encouraged in the face of new forms of business operations.

"Timely feedback should be provided on issues discovered during the law enforcement process, for adjusting and revising the regulations and continuously improving the methods of stall management," Ma said.

"Legislation is not the last step in urban management. More attention needs to be paid to implementation."

A vendor dressed in a frog costume sells balloons at a popular pedestrian street in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Saturday.
LI CHANGLIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

CHINA

Left: Chen Tianrun (front left), founder and CEO of KOKONI 3D, a maker of 3D printers, introduces his company's product to clients. **Middle:** Wang Zhenyang explains a "digital human" app developed by his team on the stage of an internet, innovation and entrepreneurship competition held in Chongqing last month. **Right:** Song Zhuochen (left) talks with a farmer to get feedback on a smart device designed by his team that monitors the daily routines and health of sheep. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Student startups set to surge as 'digital natives' drive innovation

A new generation of high-tech entrepreneurs is emerging from China's colleges. **Zou Shuo** reports.

As a "digital native" — someone born after the invention of the internet — Wang Zhenyang believes that the digital approach to life has bright prospects. That's why he has started a business focusing on the emotional support and companionship that can be provided by "virtual humans".

The 22-year-old student was a member of a team from Zhejiang University that took third place at the eighth China International College Students' "Internet +" Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, held at Chongqing University last month.

A total of 3.4 million projects were submitted for consideration in this year's competition, while the number of students that applied to take part reached 14.5 million. They hailed from 4,554 universities and colleges in 111 countries and regions. The event saw the number of hopeful participants exceed 10 million for the first time. Since the event was inaugurated in 2015, nearly 39.83 million students have applied to take part.

Wang Zhenyang listens to comments from experts at the eighth China International College Students' "Internet +" Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, held at Chongqing University last month.

Promoting good habits

Wang said that his team is focused on creating a "digital human" app that can encourage the formation of good habits and help alleviate the loneliness many young people feel nowadays.

Once users have completed their preprogrammed daily workout, their digital image on the app becomes energetic. Conversely, if they have stayed up late, the image will have dark circles under its eyes, he added.

The aim is to create a virtual world where users receive instant feedback by completing everyday tasks and routines. A survey of several thousand university students conducted by Wang's team showed that about 80 percent of respondents have great enthusiasm for the virtual world and the app.

Wang said he had not thought about starting a business until he watched an innovation competition at his university last year. After more than a year of work, his team has developed an app with 2D virtual humans, and is now working on a 3D version, he said.

To provide funding for the app, he has spent almost all the money he made by tutoring other students in college, and he hopes that it will be officially launched late next month or in July.

"I know it is difficult to be successful as a first-time entrepreneur, but I will have no regrets whether the app is a success or not," he said.

Chen Tianrun (center) meets with colleagues to discuss the 3D printer they have produced.

Since he started his startup journey, he has been extremely busy balancing study and entrepreneurship. He rarely takes a break, even during vacations.

"However, it has been a worthwhile experience. As someone who majors in computer science, I have learned marketing skills, how to talk to investors and manage a team, and I've also become more eloquent," he said.

Making an impression

Like Wang, many of the participants in the innovation and entrepreneurship competition were born in 2000 or after.

Chen Tianrun is the founder and CEO of KOKONI 3D, which makes 3D printers in Zhejiang.

"I noticed that young people today are looking for ways to tap into their passion for the fascinating and the mundane. Driven by this magical pull, I took it upon myself to dive headfirst into the world of 3D printing: It's a fusion of technology and creativity that never fails to inspire awe and wonder," the 23-year-old said.

In 2020, Chen started his endeavors in his dormitory at Zhejiang University with two roommates. They turned their dorm into a workshop and each studied different topics. After many sleepless nights and countless experiments, they succeeded in developing a prototype 3D printer on the empty bed they used as their workstation.

When a customer scans a photo into the printer, a 3D physical model can be printed out.

Chen founded the company in Huzhou, Zhejiang, in 2021. In March last year, it started mass production of what the team said is the first printer of its type to incorporate instant artificial intelligence 3D modeling.

The device is sold in more than 30 countries and regions, and so far it has generated tens of millions of yuan in income.

From less than 30 square meters of dormitory and a three-man team, the company now has more than 150 employees and occupies more than 2,000 sq m.

"As an engineering major, there's nothing more fulfilling than creating something practical and seeing people bring their wildest ideas to life with my product. It's the perfect fusion of usefulness and creativity," Chen said.

As a postgraduate student, he works in the company's office from 8 am to 5 pm, then catches up on his studies until midnight. He travels between Huzhou (his company) and Hangzhou (his university) almost every day.

"Juggling my studies and running a company is no easy task, but the thrill of pursuing my passion and creating value in various ways is worth every moment of effort."

Sheep and success

Song Zhuochen's entrepreneurship journey began with a poverty alleviation program initiated by his school, Xidian University in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province.

His team has developed a device that uses a chip and smart fences to monitor the daily routines and health of sheep, sending alerts to owners via a smartphone app when abnormalities are detected.

By recording the amount of milk each ewe can produce, the device can identify those with the highest yields.

Song became involved in the program in his first year at university in 2018, and he started traveling to two townships in Shaanxi's Pucheng county because the university was investing its resources to assist in the eradication of absolute poverty.

He has spent lots of time and energy on the program. Traveling to the townships from Xi'an takes more than four hours, and he visits several times a month.

To ensure that the program would be successful, Song suspended his studies in 2020 and devoted all his attention to the program.

He conducted a great deal of research in the university laboratory, and whenever he made progress, he brought the device to the sheepfold for testing.

His efforts paid off: 120 households in the townships have participated in the program and started raising sheep. As a result, each household's annual income has risen by 12,000 yuan ($1,710).

Currently a senior undergraduate in intelligent science and technology, Song will undertake postgraduate studies in computer science at Xidian, starting in September.

He hopes that the rights to his device will be bought by a major farm or dairy company, so it will benefit more people.

In the future, Song said he wants to continue making the device better and more profitable.

"Although becoming a coder or working for an information technology company in a big city can bring in a decent salary, I would very much like to continue my work in the villages and around the sheep," he said.

"The vast rural areas can be the places where graduates can make the most of what they have learned at university."

Contact the writer at zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

TALKING POINT

Dorms and dreamers

Zou Shuo

I have attended the China International College Students' "Internet +" Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition four times.

Each time, I have been amazed by the scale of the competition, which keeps growing every year, and how talented and hardworking college students are.

Their projects cover everything from robots, helicopters, drones, fishing and agriculture to infrared intelligent computational imaging.

As someone who majored in English at undergraduate and postgraduate level, I often struggle to understand the projects. Therefore, every time I interviewed a student I first asked them to explain their work to me in the simplest way, but there were still times when I could not understand them.

In addition to the high-end, fancy projects, there are those aimed at improving people's lives, especially the less fortunate.

A Braille reader developed by a team from Chongqing University helps visually impaired people understand the wider world through reading.

Huang Zhou, an undergraduate at the university who leads the team, said the members were inspired to develop the device when they visited a local visually impaired couple as freshmen. The couple told them that reading books can be inconvenient and they wanted to read as easily as nondisabled people.

In response, the students developed a reader that can display 100 Braille words on a single page, and it is sold at a much cheaper price than comparable products on the market, Huang said.

"While visually impaired people can obtain information via aural input, such information is easily forgotten. Meanwhile, Braille books can be cumbersome and there just aren't enough of them, which is why our project is very significant," she said.

I think that starting one's own business must be extremely difficult, especially for college students who also have to study and may lack the required resources and connections that can make their businesses successful.

Many students I interviewed told me that they only slept a few hours a night, and in order to make their project better, they needed to spend many sleepless nights conducting experiments and trying to find investors.

However, such people are often highly innovative, and they can produce original ideas that can improve people's lives in different ways.

That is why the government and universities have offered students various favorable policies to help them turn their ideas into reality.

With the unemployment rate for people ages 16 to 24 reaching about 20 percent, innovation and entrepreneurship are good ways of boosting employment levels among college students.

After the eighth edition of the competition, many former contestants' projects have become successful businesses employing hundreds or even thousands of people.

One student told me that it is not difficult to maintain the pace once you actually start a business: what is difficult is for students to genuinely want to start a company.

Hopefully, as more get involved in the competition and entrepreneurship, the next major startups will come from students' dormitories.

Authorities promote measures to create favorable environment

By ZOU SHUO

China has introduced a raft of measures to boost entrepreneurship and innovation among college students by creating a favorable environment for them to launch startups and innovative projects.

In 2015, the general office of the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a guideline to improve the innovation and entrepreneurship courses at the country's universities.

The guideline urged universities to support student entrepreneurship by transferring study credits and setting up flexible learning schedules. Local governments and universities were ordered to make full use of resources to set up university technology bases, student entrepreneurship centers and incubators. Meanwhile, organizations, groups and enterprises were encouraged to set up venture funds for student entrepreneurs, the guideline said.

Moreover, a guideline issued by the Ministry of Education in 2017 said university students can suspend their studies when setting up businesses, and the papers, patents and other achievements in their entrepreneurship can be transferred into school credits. Huai Jinpeng, minister of education, said such students are full of imagination and creativity, and they can be the driving force for entrepreneurship and innovation.

In recent years, China has established a path to expand entrepreneurship and innovation among college students, nurtured innovative talents and promoted the integration of learning and technological innovation, he said.

Jobs have been created through student startups, thus assisting high-quality socioeconomic development, poverty alleviation and rural vitalization, Huai said. The country will continue to support entrepreneurship and innovation among college students by building new platforms, promoting international cooperation and expanding policy support in the sector, he added.

Yin Peng, deputy dean of the School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Xidian University in Shaanxi province, said the school produces about 50 relatively sophisticated startups every year.

As a university with strong information technology-related majors, students in the field are eager to develop mini-apps and start their own IT businesses, he said.

The university also offers a range of policies to support students who want to start businesses, such as providing funding, workspaces, equipment and assistance in finding investors, he said.

When students try to start businesses, they should become better acquainted with schoolmates and teachers who have similar interests, and widen their knowledge via different disciplines, Yin said, adding that students are also allowed to suspend their studies for a maximum of two years to focus on their startup.

"As an engineering university, we encourage students to be innovative in technology and possibly spearhead innovation in a completely new sector," he said.

"We want students to start their businesses in college, because it is a very hard thing to do and they have nothing to lose while they are still students. Even if they fail, they will have gained valuable experience through the process."

CHINA

Policeman was fearless and compassionate

Popular 12-year special patrol brigade veteran succumbed to heart attack

By YANG ZEKUN
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From left: Ye Yongliang (front) leads a team from the special patrol police brigade of Ruian city's public security bureau in a drill in Zhejiang province. Ye rappels down a building during a drill in Ruian. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In the eyes of his colleagues, Ye Yongliang was born to be a policeman. As a tactical officer, he was always the first to charge forward during dangerous tasks.

Ye, who served in the special patrol police brigade of Ruian city's public security bureau in Zhejiang province, suffered a sudden cardiac arrest while on duty on Aug 10, and passed away the same day despite efforts to save his life. He was 35.

A native of Ruian, Ye joined the Communist Party of China in November 2008 and the police force in July 2010.

The 12-year veteran held various positions in a community police station and in the brigade. He earned numerous personal commendations and awards, including twice receiving third-class merit for outstanding performance.

In December 2022, the Ministry of Public Security posthumously named him "Second-Class Hero Model of the National Public Security System".

Ye graduated from the School of Physical Education at Ningbo University in Ningbo, Zhejiang, where he also excelled as a long-distance runner.

A popular figure in the police force, he ranked first in nearly all the brigade's training exercises.

As an instructor, Ye taught his teammates police skills and investigative techniques. Yu Kaixuan, a member of the brigade, remembered how Ye paid particular attention to new police officers.

"Whenever he noticed that new recruits were becoming anxious during high-intensity training or 24-hour standby duty, he would take them aside and encourage them not to be afraid, motivating them to do their best," Yu said.

Tactical police officers are on the front lines during riots or when engaging with terrorism suspects, working to maintain stability while dealing with emergencies.

Once in June 2021, an old mortar shell was found at the construction site of an electroplating park in Ruian. The shell was rusty and had the potential to detonate at any time.

Ye took the initiative to deal with the matter. After ensuring that people had safely evacuated the area, he put on an explosion-proof suit and successfully disposed of the shell.

The park contained dangerous chemicals such as potassium cyanide, and there were many residents in the area.

If the shell had exploded, the consequences would have been unimaginable, said Shao Xiaobo, a fellow instructor.

Shao said that Ye was a trustworthy teammate and showed no fear, no matter how dangerous the work was, always leading colleagues as he charged into a situation.

Shao recalled an incident one evening in May last year when a knife-wielding criminal was spotted in a local community. Ye and his colleagues, who were patrolling nearby, rushed to the scene and managed to trap the suspect in a building that was under construction. While searching the premises, they discovered the suspect hiding in a water tank on the roof. "Ye climbed onto the water tank and in one swift move, disarmed the suspect and captured him," Shao said.

Apart from being a respected police officer, Ye was also a devoted family man. He married in 2015, and the couple had a daughter two years later. He spent almost all of his spare time with the girl.

Ye's wife remembers him as a kind, honest and responsible person who showed his love for her in small but meaningful ways. Despite not being particularly romantic, he made her feel safe and cared for.

At his funeral, his 5-year-old daughter said goodbye, and referred to her father as the brightest star in the sky.

Lawman pursued suspects until the end

By YANG ZEKUN

The way his colleagues remember it, Chen Yong, the deputy director of Xicheng Police Station, part of the Xingping Public Security Bureau in Shaanxi province, was always the first to arrest suspects, and was attempting to do so until the final moments of his life.

Chen became a police officer in August 2000. During his 22 years as an officer, he participated in 170 conflicts and disputes, handled 190 criminal cases and arrested 120 suspects. Chen died in the line of duty while attempting to arrest a suspect on July 27 at age 43.

The Ministry of Public Security posthumously named him a "Second-Class Hero Model of the National Public Security System" in September.

In mid-June, the station discovered that a criminal gang was helping overseas telecom fraud gangs launder huge amounts of money by buying gold.

In reaction to these findings, Chen immediately began to investigate the case in conjunction with other departments. Through tracking and analysis, he was able to shed light on the division of labor and makeup of the gang and track their activities.

After careful deployment, Chen and his colleagues headed the arrest of the suspects on July 27.

When the suspects attempted to leave the scene in an SUV and a commercial vehicle, Chen rushed in to try to stop them, pulling open the SUV's door. He was severely beaten as the suspects resisted arrest.

> I worked with him for seven years, and he was often at the forefront of every case."
>
> **Wang Anxin,** Chen Yong's colleague at Xicheng Police Station in Xingping, Shaanxi province

Amid fierce fighting, one suspect attempted to escape the scene at high speed, resulting in Chen and two other officers falling from the vehicle. A second suspect in the other vehicle ran over Chen as he was trying to get up.

When his colleagues rushed to his aid, Chen urged them to go and catch the suspects first, and then lapsed into unconsciousness. Rushed to the hospital, he died after emergency treatment failed to save his life. The following day, nine suspects were arrested.

Influenced by his father, who had also been a police officer, Chen was determined to become an officer at an early age. In July 2000, after graduating from university, he joined the financial crimes investigation brigade at the Xingping Public Security Bureau. He was always humble and studied hard, turning himself into an expert in financial investigations.

"He sometimes didn't go home for a month or more as he worked on cases. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he fought day and night on the front lines and did not go home for more than two months," his father said.

Chen used to say that as long as he was in charge of a case, he had to be the first to find the suspects, and he repeatedly risked his life to catch them, according to his colleague, Wang Anxin.

"I worked with him for seven years, and he was often at the forefront of every case," Wang said.

In September 2006, the police received a report about a person who had been defrauded out of 30,000 yuan. Chen and his colleagues worked on the case for two weeks and discovered that the suspect was hiding in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. Chen drove to Taiyuan and caught the suspect in a hotel, and was able to recover the stolen money.

After he started working at the police station, Chen quickly integrated with the local community and became an expert at solving community disputes due to his patience.

He often told young officers that as police officers, they were there to serve the public, and they needed to be patient and listen to their needs carefully to help them and resolve disputes.

Thousands of people turned out for Chen's funeral, and the Shaanxi Provincial People's Government recognized him as a martyr.

Chen Yong, center, talks with students at a primary school in Xingping, Shaanxi province, during a law popularization event. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Decorated officer lost life protecting colleagues in final act of heroism

By YANG ZEKUN

Cheng Kai leads a mission in Huangmei county, Hubei province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The week before his death, Cheng Kai, former deputy head of the Huangmei Police Station in Huangmei county, Hubei province, and his teammates worked for nearly 20 hours a day traveling around five different counties in search of six suspects.

On Sept 16, Cheng and four other colleagues planned to arrest a suspect involved in a series of car thefts. That morning, police discovered that the suspect had escaped in a van and immediately gave chase.

After stopping the suspect's vehicle on a mountain road, Cheng and his colleagues surrounded the van on both sides and attempted to detain the man when he threw his vehicle into reverse at high speed. Cheng was holding onto the door handle and attempted to stop him from reversing. The suspect fought back and twisted the steering wheel, causing the van to roll over.

At the critical moment, Cheng pushed his colleagues away and tumbled into a pit as the van crushed him. The suspect exited the van and attacked the officers with a long knife as they were trying to free Cheng. He was suffocated by the vehicle.

In January, the Ministry of Public Security posthumously awarded him the title of "Second-Class Hero Model of the National Public Security System".

Born in 1975, Cheng was a native of Huangmei. He joined the armed police force in Chaohu, Anhui province, at 18.

In 1996, a section of a dam on the Yangtze River ruptured in a county in Chaohu, resulting in severe flooding. Cheng and his team joined forces with the commandos to rescue 68 people trapped in a village.

He became a police officer in Huangmei in 1998. During his 24-year career, he participated in the arrest of 100 criminal gangs and solved 1,000 cases. He received numerous awards.

Wan Zhifeng, head of an environmental agriculture company in Huangmei, said that without Cheng's help, he wouldn't have been able to achieve what he has today.

Some 10 years ago, Wan was taken into police custody for provoking trouble and wounding a person after drinking.

Cheng handled his case. He visited Wan's neighbors and community officials several times and discovered that Wan was known for his impatience, so he organized a mediation between the parties.

Later, Cheng told Wan that committing illegal acts could destroy a person's life and urged him not to be so impulsive in the future.

"His care for me made me think about my life, and I decided to make some changes," Wan said.

For more than 10 years, Wan and Cheng remained in touch and looked out for each other, and as his life turned around, Wan was encouraged to start his own company.

Cheng's father, elder brother and daughter are all police officers.

He and his elder brother last saw each other during the Mid-Autumn Festival last year.

The brothers originally intended to go home to be with their father for the holiday, but Cheng was unable to go due to a case he was working on. As a result, his family did not see him before his death.

Cheng's daughter, who fulfilled her dream of becoming a police officer in 2020, said she admired her father. After joining the force, she said she was able to understand why he often had to travel for work and was not able to stay at home with her.

"As my father told me, it's only on the front line of police work that you understand what people think, experience their suffering and are able to serve them up close."

COMMENT

Editorials

Quad offers destabilizing agenda of empty promises, coercion and division

Although the Quad summit scheduled to open in Sydney on May 24 was canceled as US President Joe Biden had to return home for debt-ceiling negotiations with the speaker of the House of Representatives, the leaders of the four countries — Japan, Australia and India being the other three — still managed to hold a de facto summit in the Japanese city of Hiroshima on Saturday.

As the long joint statement they issued on Sunday indicates, despite the meeting being arranged in a hurry and downsized to a brief roundtable talk, the third in-person meeting of the leaders still had a busy anti-China agenda to discuss. An agenda complicated by the fact that the onus is on Washington to prevent Sino-US relations from taking any misstep that might lead to a conflict.

It is for this reason that the Quad has stopped trying to coerce countries in the region to cut their ties with China. Instead, as the joint statement made clear, the Quad is trying to pull regional countries to its side.

To achieve this aim, the Quad has become more specific in its proposed cooperation with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Indian Ocean Rim Association, offering support for their green and digital development, and to strengthen their responses to climate change and terrorism.

The joint statement shows the Quad has apparently done more homework than before as it has mentioned almost all the major initiatives, strategies, programs and plans these countries have put forward or have already implemented, collectively and individually, including the ASEAN Outlook on the "Indo-Pacific", the Pacific Island Forum's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Indian Ocean Rim Association Outlook on the "Indo-Pacific".

However, knowing these countries' concerns is far from enough to help them address them. Judging from the US' poor track record in matching its words with deeds in providing technology and funding when it comes to its assistance programs for the region, it remains to be seen to what extent the Quad will fulfill its grand promises this time.

That all countries in the region are mentioned in the joint statement, except China, the biggest economy, the largest trading country, the most important logistics hub and the biggest supporter of regional development, fully exposes the divisive nature of the Quad's proposed cooperation.

The countries the Quad intends to support should also be aware that while most of the assistance will only exist on paper, that which is provided will come with strings attached.

Also, it will only be a matter of time for Tokyo and Canberra to realize that the mechanism is just a harness Washington has imposed on them — India is more of a taker than a giver under the framework — so that they are put in a better position to pull the US chariot in the latter's "competition" with China.

According to their joint statement, as "Indo-Pacific" countries, the Quad partners are deeply invested in the region's success. If that is the case they should be working together with China not against it.

Pacific Island countries not US' geopolitical pawns

The United States has been paying greater attention to the Pacific Island nations as part of the strategy to counter China's rising influence in the region.

Among the moves to deepen its relations with the countries in the region are a defense pact with Papua New Guinea, which was signed on Monday. This gives US troops access to the Pacific nation's ports and airports. It has also signed new strategic pacts with Palau and Micronesia, and plans to sign a similar one with the Marshall Islands in the coming weeks.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is scheduled to hold separate talks with the 14 Pacific Island countries' leaders who have gathered in the Papua New Guinea capital, Port Moresby, for a summit.

China, which has in recent years deepened its exchanges and cooperation with the Pacific Island nations in such areas as public services, education and the fishing industry, has made it clear that it is not interested in engaging in a geopolitical contest with the US in the Pacific Islands' region, or elsewhere.

Thus it is worrying to see the US continuously pushing ahead with the efforts to counter what it sees as a challenge from China's cooperative relations with countries in the region, which bodes ill for peace and stability in the region and beyond.

The plan to open a new geopolitical front against China among Pacific Island nations comes after the US announced the Pacific Partnership Strategy in September 2022, in which it underscored what it claims is "pressure and economic coercion" from China that "risks undermining the peace, prosperity, and security of the region".

Yet despite the latest deals, whether the Pacific Island nations will join the US-orchestrated anti-China chorus is doubtful, mainly because nearly all of the countries see climate change, not China, as the major threat.

The nature of the US' charm offensive among the island nations – which is to contain China's influence rather than address their development needs – determines its Pacific strategy will not go very far, especially given the Pacific Island leaders do not want to be forced to choose sides between China and the US. For example, Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape has denied the signing of the deal with the US would stop his country from working with China, an important trade partner.

The US should contribute more to the development of the Pacific Island nations, rather than trying to cajole them to get on its anti-China chariot.

Federal debt limit a harmful selfish game

Having cut short a trip to Asia to resume talks on raising the US debt ceiling ahead of the US Treasury's June 1 deadline for Congress to authorize more borrowing, US President Joe Biden spoke with Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy by phone on his way back to the United States.

Biden told reporters that the phone call "went well" on his arrival at the White House on Sunday night, with McCarthy saying earlier in the day that it had been "productive".

But that remains to be seen, with the two continuing their negations on Monday.

Ahead of those talks, there was no sign of either side being prepared to give ground. The US government debt crisis has entered the 10-day countdown with some observers saying the two sides are playing a game of chicken.

Republicans are demanding harsh social welfare spending cuts to reduce the US deficit as the condition for their approval to raise the debt limit, while Biden has countered with an agreement to reduce some spending and raising new revenue by increasing taxes on the rich and corporations. Republicans have refused to accept any such tax increases.

If they fail to strike a debt deal this time, Washington will be unable to pay its bills. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in an interview on Sunday that "My assessment is that the odds of reaching June 15th, while being able to pay all of our bills, is quite low".

Failure to do so would severely damage the US' global leadership as it would trigger shock waves worldwide and tarnish its image.

That Biden canceled his planned visits to Australia and Papua New Guinea for the negotiations with McCarthy shows the graveness of the issue.

Yet even with a US debt default within sight and the markets becoming increasingly jittery, neither side wants to give ground with next year's presidential election looming on the horizon.

No wonder when the House Republican leadership and the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus raised proposals to resolve the debt ceiling issue on April 20, the Peter G. Peterson Foundation said in a statement "this is a moment for leadership that puts our nation above party politics".

That proved not to be the moment.

For the two parties, their political wrangling has become a game that takes precedence over everything.

Damn the consequences.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

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Cai Meng

Opinion Line

Online charity contributes to modernization and prosperity

The "Chinese example" of internet philanthropy is undergoing constant innovations, a report issued by a recent internet good summit in Wuhan, Hubei province, points out.

Driven by the digital boom, technological progress and enterprise innovation, and under the guarantee of policies and laws, China's internet-based charity undertaking is advancing in an innovative and higher-quality manner. This year marks the 8th anniversary of the enactment of the Charity Law in China, and the past eight years have witnessed the growth, formation and development of the internet-based charity cause in the country.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, donations raised through internet platforms in China increased from 2.5 billion yuan ($355.87 million) in 2017 to nearly 10 billion yuan in 2021, with more than 10 billion people participating in internet charity in the past three years.

China's internet philanthropy has achieved high-quality development thanks to its rapid economic growth, technological innovation and high-quality economic and social development. A report issued by Credit Suisse on global wealth shows that by the end of 2021, global household wealth reached $463.6 trillion, and China's wealth reached $85.1 trillion, ranking second in the world. Between 2000 and 2021, the median wealth of Chinese people rose from $3,133 to $26,800. In 2021, the scale of China's digital economy reached 45.5 trillion yuan, more than double that in the early part of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), accounting for 39.8 percent of the GDP.

China's rapid economic growth, huge wealth accumulation and strong support from the digital economy have laid an important foundation for the development of internet philanthropy. Even the government has improved the charity policy and regulation system, established a support and encouragement policy system that consists of government service purchase, tax and other incentives, and designated 30 organizations for online charity fundraising.

The top authorities have stressed that China will establish a coordinated income distribution system featuring primary distribution, redistribution and third distribution, and guide and support capable enterprises, social organizations and individuals to take an active part in public welfare and charity undertakings. The healthy, sustainable and high-quality development of China's internet charity will surely play a greater role in building a Chinese path to modernization featuring common prosperity, harmony between material and spiritual civilization, and harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

— BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

Western media organizations happy to hype

Even Micron, the US chip giant, might not have expected China's ban of its products to make waves in Western media reports.

Hours after China announced that Micron had failed its security review and asked key domestic network security management companies to suspend purchase of its products, the ban made headlines in almost every Western media outlet. A majority of them, if not all, even tried to link it to restrictions the United States and its allies had imposed on China, implying that the move was political.

It is good to note that even Western media outlets realize the unfair restrictions their governments have imposed on China. For far too long, the US has been abusing its dominance in the global technological sector to contain China. Without any solid basis, using the guise of "national security", the US has launched attacks against Huawei and ZTE. It has blocked Huawei in their country, even though that means their 5G network construction will lag far behind.

The US and its ally Canada even detained Huawei senior executive Meng Wanzhou for 1,028 days under an unsubstantiated charge.

While reporting about those incidents, the Western media outlets were careful to categorize them as business news, not even once mentioning the word "politics". However, now that China has suspended a US company's product out of security concerns, the same Western media outlets are crying "politics". No wonder some of the outlets are not taken seriously in their own country, often being criticized for peddling fake news. They are rarely known to describe things as they happened, but as what they believe should have happened.

As a company, what Micron needs to do is to improve its security measures to clear China's national security review. The Western media is not helping much by hyping things up.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Sunak should stop shooting his mouth off

Since the pressure from Washington for him to be tough on Beijing was enough for United Kingdom Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to openly call China "biggest challenge of our age to global security and prosperity" in a news conference after the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, on Sunday, nobody knows how far the UK leader will go if Washington tightens the screws on him.

Parroting Washington's rhetoric, he said that China is the "only country with both the means and intent to reshape the world order", and "this is all about de-risking, not de-coupling". When asked to expound on what he meant by that, Sunak said: "We will work together as the G7 and with other countries to make sure that we can de-risk ourselves and the vulnerability of supply chains that we have seen from China, take the steps necessary to protect ourselves against hostile investment and do so in a way that doesn't damage each other."

Sunak was the only leader of the rich club to be so loose-lipped. It is clear that he is betting all the United Kingdom's national interests on the United States.

He has also taken a leaf out of Washington's playbook blaming the UK's domestic economic and social problems on external challenges, even though everyone without bias knows that China is a builder of world peace, contributor to global development and defender of the international order. Meanwhile the US and a few of its vassals, with the UK being a case in point, are constantly interfering in other countries' internal affairs and provoking confrontation and confrontation. It is they who are the biggest challenge to global stability and prosperity.

It is suggested that Sunak devote more energy to dealing with the UK's own domestic political, economic and social problems, instead of always blindly following the US, stirring up trouble everywhere, and creating division and confrontation. Sunak should immediately stop slandering China so as not to cause further damage to China-UK relations, for which the Sunak government should be held accountable.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

VIEWS

Jophey Chan

Xi'an summit rebuts Western lies

The just-concluded China-Central Asia Summit, held in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, has elevated China-Central Asian cooperation to new heights. In the 10th year of the Belt and Road Initiative, China and the Central Asian countries have cast their decisive vote to expand cooperation, especially in areas such as new energy and infrastructure development amid the fast-changing geopolitical landscape.

The Central Asia region, comprising upper-middle- and low-income economies, holds significant strategic importance due to its geographical position and natural resource reserves. Recognizing its vital importance, President Xi Jinping, in his keynote speech at the summit, said China is ready to align its development policies and plans with those of the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and deepen cooperation to facilitate modernization and achieve common prosperity.

But despite the positive developments, many Western media outlets have been trying to politicize the summit. Even before the summit began, some Western media outlets tried to spark controversy by splashing headlines such as "Chinese-Russian competition in Central Asia", "China filling Russia's position in Central Asia", and "Russian-Central Asian relations deteriorating", implying that relations between China and Russia, and among China and Russia and the five Central Asian countries were deteriorating.

Needless to say, these are desperate attempts by the Western media to sow the seed of discord between China, Russia on the one side and the Central Asian countries on the other.

Given their narrow political goals, the Western media overlook the fact that

The China-Central Asia Summit is a platform for promoting regional cooperation and development in various fields, from infrastructure and energy to trade and cultural exchanges.

China and Russia share a common interest in fostering regional stability and development. Cooperation between China, Russia and the Central Asian nations is mutually beneficial, not hegemonic.

Based on their economic interests, the Central Asian countries have ample reasons to pursue a comprehensive, diversified foreign policy, maintaining friendly relations with both China and Russia. The strong trade relations between the five Central Asian countries, and China and Russia prove that instead of deteriorating, overall relations among the seven countries are strengthening. The Central Asian countries import dozens of agricultural products including wheat, soybean, fruits and beef from China, with their trade volume reaching a record $70 billion last year.

Pursuing close cooperation with China and maintaining friendly relations with Russia are not contradictory, especially when China and Russia have become comprehensive strategic partners in the new era. According to National Bureau of Statistics data for 2022, the trade volume between China and Russia reached a historic high of $190.27 billion, with an annual growth rate of 29.3 percent.

Given these facts, relations between China, Russia and the Central Asian countries will not be shaken easily by Western propaganda.

Western media also argue that the fact that China hosted the China-Central Asia Summit around the same time as the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan, shows it wants to compete with the developed economies on the diplomatic front.

The fact is that China's foreign diplomacy is based on the principle of "building a community with a shared future", which was first officially proposed at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012. The principle is aimed at fostering economic integration, cultural exchanges, and mutual growth and understanding. That explains why many are saying the decisions made at the Xi'an summit will help improve global connectivity and industrial cooperation.

The Xi'an summit could do so because, unlike the G7 Summit, it was not obsessed with political issues such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, although the United States' efforts to maintain its global hegemony have been affecting the Central Asian region and the rest of the world.

The G7 Summit is nothing but a political theatre staged by a small clique which excels in smearing China and Russia. A Chinese proverb, "never gauge the heart of a man with your own measure", best describes the G7 summit. The proverb cautions people against judging others based on one's narrow yardstick, and reminds them to refrain from projecting their own biases onto others, especially those with a higher moral character.

The China-Central Asia Summit is a platform for promoting regional cooperation and development in various fields, from infrastructure and energy to trade and cultural exchanges. As China continues to deepen its ties with the Central Asian countries, the Belt and Road Initiative plays a crucial role in enhancing regional development and economic integration.

The initiative has brought tangible benefits to the people of Central Asia. And the many infrastructure projects underway, including railways, highways and power plants, will bring more benefits to the region, especially because China has committed to providing the Central Asian countries with 26 billion yuan ($3.71 billion) in financing support and grants to bolster regional cooperation and development.

As for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, it can tap the Central Asian market by leveraging its strength as the world's largest offshore renminbi financial hub, and by offering the most diverse range of renminbi investment, financing, and risk management products. As such, Hong Kong should take measures to deepen its economic and trade engagement with the Central Asian countries.

In conclusion, the China-Central Asia Summit serves as a testament to China's commitment to regional cooperation and development. The summit will help maintain regional stability and promote common prosperity amid the changing global political landscape. In the face of Western media's divisive narratives that attempt to make the China-Central Asia Summit a political issue and create discord among the participating countries, China's actions to achieve common prosperity speak louder than words.

The author is a member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, the UN Association of China, and All-China Youth Federation.
The views don't reflect those of China Daily.

Cao Jia

Jobs key to tapping grads' development potential

Life in China has gradually returned to normal after the government eased the strict pandemic prevention and control measures while introducing an array of policies to promote employment and boost the economy. Yet the domestic economic recovery is hampered by the slowdown of the global economy and other challenges.

Amid all this, the number of college graduates this year is expected to reach a record high of roughly 11.58 million, up 820,000 year-on-year. Add to that the increasing numbers of overseas college graduates returning home every year, youths who graduated from college last year but couldn't find a job, and you will get an idea of the immense pressure the job market is under.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the surveyed unemployment rate for people aged 16 to 24 was as high as 19.6 percent in the first quarter of 2023, and even 20.4 percent in April. This shows youths, especially college graduates, are finding it increasingly difficult to find a job.

Since college graduates are precious human resources, the government attaches great importance to their employment and overall well-being. For example, the Central Economic Work Conference stressed that the employment channels for college graduates be increased on a priority basis. Also, multiple government departments have introduced policies and measures to help youths find a job or start their own business.

First, the government has announced tax deductions and exemptions, as well as subsidies for the public sector, and small and medium-sized enterprises to encourage them to recruit more college graduates, with the aim of raising the employment rate, stabilizing the job market and creating more job opportunities at the grassroots level. So college graduates should seek employment in grassroots organizations if they cannot find a job in the traditional or emerging sectors.

Second, the government has adopted favorable policies and built resource docking platforms, while providing guidance to support college graduates to start their own business. The government has also vowed to protect the college graduates' right to seek flexible employment.

Third, the central and local governments are holding job fairs in different areas to facilitate the employment of college graduates, and government departments have intensified their on-campus recruitment and have been holding job-advisory camps to provide employment information for college graduates.

MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Efforts are also on to establish databases to track and monitor graduates' employment situation, and raise the employment rate by providing subsidies, training and tailor-made employment policies for graduates, especially those with special needs.

Fourth, the government plans to provide training for graduates to help them adapt to the demands of emerging industries and the modern service sector. For instance, the State Council, China's Cabinet, recently issued a notice saying that at least 1 million internship positions will be offered by companies, government institutions and social organizations this year. Meant for young job seekers, the internship comes with living allowances.

The array of research options and management posts on offer will help the college graduates enrich their internship experience.

And fifth, the authorities have adopted policies to better protect the rights of graduates and hold those violating their rights accountable. They have also been organizing activities to enhance graduates' legal awareness, including helping them protect their legal rights and seek compensation for the violation of their rights.

However, efforts should also be made to implement more favorable policies, promote high-quality development and stabilize the overall job market. The authorities need to improve the business environment, too, and help SMEs adjust their structure and boost employment.

Moreover, the public sector needs to create high-quality job positions for graduates in order to optimize the employment services and balance supply and demand. And the government should provide guidance and create a healthy business environment so college graduates can start their own businesses.

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Kang Bing

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Higher penalty for dog attacks will force pet owners to follow rules

Editor's note: *The pet-friendly community can provide numerous benefits for both residents and pet owners. In addition, pet owners can enjoy a sense of community with individuals who share their love for animals, writes a veteran journalist with China Daily.*

My neighbor, Grandma Li, would have taken a much longer time to reach home had it not been for the help of a young couple. "I was attacked by a dog outside our community compound," she told the neighbors in a trembling voice the other day.

She said that as she was entering the community compound, a big border collie rushed out of the bushes and jumped on her. Panicked, she began shouting while protecting herself with her hands. At the "last second" the dog was stopped by her owner who was standing about 50 meters away.

The owner called her dog back and walked away without even apologizing. A young couple passing by accompanied the visibly shaken Grandma Li to her apartment. On checking, we found that her blood pressure had shot up and heart was beating faster than normal.

Grandma Li was largely bedridden for the next few days. Often she would wake up with a start, the effects of a nightmare. The neighbors discussed whether or not to dial 110 and seek the appropriate punishment for the person responsible for Grandma Li's trauma, but after studying how the police had dealt with similar cases in the past, they decided not to do so.

So it's time the authorities revised relevant laws and regulations in order to better protect the interests and, sometimes, lives, of dog attack victims.

There are more than 50 million registered pet dogs in China. If we include the abandoned and unregistered dogs, the number could be well over 80 million. Also, an estimated 40 million people suffer dog and cat attacks each year. Considering that dogs are responsible for half of the attacks, the number of dog attacks would be about 20 million a year. Even if we assume that 90 percent of the dog attack victims are the dog owners or their family members, we still have 2 million dogs attacking non-family members every year.

Besides, reports from regional police departments show that disputes related to dog attacks have become the most frequent cases they have to deal with. But the lack of specific laws and regulations prevent the police from handling such cases appropriately. What the police can do in the existing circumstances is to ask the dog owner to not walk the dog in public places, persuade him or her to pay the medical bill of the dog attack victim and, if the dog owner refuses to do so, inform the victim that he or she has the right to sue the dog owner in court.

The problem is that even if the victim wins the case, the dog owner might be asked to pay the medical bill of the victim, as well as compensation for the loss of the victim's working time, which might add up to a few thousand yuan. In such a scenario, what happens to victims like Grandma Li who was not bitten by the dog but still suffered from serious trauma. The most the police can do is to issue a warning to the dog owner, asking her or him to publicly apologize to Grandma Li. But a forced apology is unlikely to be sincere.

Grandma Li is one of the many victims of a dog attack. Although China has central and local laws and regulations on animals, they mostly focus on the protection of animals rather than victims of animal attacks.

According to government regulations, dogs should be always leashed in public places and dog owners should appropriately dispose of the pet's excreta. But such regulations are not followed by all dog owners. So it's time the authorities revised relevant laws and regulations in order to better protect the interests and, sometimes, lives, of dog attack victims.

And while revising the laws and regulations, the authorities should consider subjecting dog owners to pay heavy compensation in case their pet attacks anyone, especially because such a provision has helped reduce dog attacks in many countries. In fact, in some countries, the average compensation amount for a dog bite is $30,000.

If the compensation amount for a dog bite is raised drastically, dog owners will be forced to pay huge amounts to buy insurance for their pet and make sure they are always kept on a leash in a public place.

WORLD

Editor's note: *Bills aimed at banning Chinese and other nationals from buying land in the United States have triggered fears of anti-Asian hate crimes. This page takes a closer look at how history is repeating itself in the form of new legislation in some states as well as the hardships faced by those who have suffered discrimination.*

Hundreds of people gather in Atlanta, Georgia, to protest the increasing violence against Asian people in the United States, on March 20, 2021. USA TODAY NETWORK VIA REUTERS

Two people leave a message on a cross at a makeshift memorial on May 10 in Allen, Texas, by the mall where a gunman opened fire on May 6, killing eight people. TONY GUTIERREZ / ASSOCIATED PRESS

With new land laws, history repeats itself

Asians feel 'besieged', worry about hate crimes as bills are either proposed or passed in nearly 30 US states

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston
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When Echo King's friend texted her about the passing of Florida's legislation SB 264 in the state Senate on April 11, she did not believe it.

After all, it is 2023, more than 50 years after the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed and more than 10 years after the US Congress expressed regret and issued an apology for the act, and bills such as the Alien Land Laws were a thing of the past.

To verify the text message, she went to the state government's website and read the contents of the bill. To her shock, it was all true: SB 264 would ban citizens, entities and companies from seven countries of concern, including China, from purchasing farmland and other infrastructure. In addition, Chinese citizens are singled out in the bill to be excluded from acquiring any real estate in the state.

Sharing her experience in a Zoom meeting organized by the United Chinese Americans, a nonprofit civic movement, this month, King, an immigration lawyer in Orlando, Florida, said she quickly took action and formed a group with like-minded people from the community to fight the discriminative bill. In four days, they mobilized more than 100 people to go to Florida's capital, Tallahassee, to testify against it.

Their efforts gained support from some legislators and the bill was modified to make an exception for Chinese citizens with non-tourist visas, but still limited to single parcels smaller than 2 acres (0.81 hectares) and at least 5 miles (8 kilometers) from military bases.

Their fight was not enough to stop SB 264 from passing, and on May 8, Republican Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed it into law.

Florida is just one of more than 20 or perhaps about 30 states that have either passed similar bills, or proposed such bills but failed to pass as in Georgia and Kansas, or are still in the legislative process as in Louisiana and Texas.

Josh Yeh, a Chinese American from Kansas, said at the Zoom meeting that he felt "besieged" and is worried that Asian hate crimes will go up as a result of those bills.

"My kids, my descendants, if they want to stay in America, then I need to prepare for them. I have to speak up, hey, United States, you cannot keep doing this. This is not who you are. We believe in equality, we believe in liberty, we believe in pursuit of happiness, right?"

For Yeh, the slate of bills in so many states aiming to ban Chinese and a few other nationals from buying land feels like history is repeating itself. The Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted in 1882 and the Alien Land Laws were passed in many states in the 1910s.

"We are doing this again? In the name of national security, they can do anything. That's really scary to anyone of us. I am thinking for my kids, if we don't do anything, this will get worse," said Yeh, who has started a super PAC (political action committee) in Kansas to get actively involved in local political process.

Yeh was not alone to view the current legislative trend banning China from purchasing land in the US as a repeat of history. A February CNN report about a similar Texas bill SB 147 was titled "History repeats itself with anti-China land ownership proposals".

In the report, Madeline Hsu, a history professor and expert in Asian American studies at the University of Texas in Austin, told CNN, "It's definitely a sort of reinvocation of what people in Asian American studies would refer to as 'Yellow Peril' fearmongering."

"There are ways in which it resonates with what happened to Japanese Americans during World War II, where regardless of citizenship, regardless of nativity, they were racially categorized as enemy aliens," Hsu continued.

> "It's definitely a sort of reinvocation of what people in Asian American studies would refer to as 'Yellow Peril' fearmongering."
>
> **Madeline Hsu,** history professor and expert in Asian American studies at the University of Texas in Austin

Allen High School students light candles at a vigil four days after a gunman shot and killed eight people at a mall in Allen, Texas, on May 10. SHELBY TAUBER / REUTERS

One netizen named Mivey, commenting on Alabama's passing of HB 379 prohibiting Chinese citizens, entities and government bodies from purchasing property in the state, succinctly summed up how many Asian Americans are facing the current wave of "land laws" across so many states: "Making American 1882 again".

Yeh was not alone to worry that such bills would drive up anti-Asian hate crimes. Gene Wu, Texas representative who has been fighting hard against Texas bills aiming to prohibit Chinese citizens from buying land in Texas, said in a recent Zoom meeting that "there's increasing evidence that the shooter in Allen, Texas, specifically targeted Asian Americans".

In the May 6 shooting at an Allen mall which, according to the Texas Tribune, largely attracts minority and especially Asian shoppers, the gunman killed eight; seven of them were minorities and four of them were Asians.

Authorities found that the gunman held white supremacy and neo-Nazi beliefs and had Nazi symbols tattooed on his body, including a swastika and the SS lightning bolt logo of Adolf Hitler's paramilitary forces. His social media account showed that he posted about his fantasies of race wars and used violent, hateful rhetoric that targeted Asian people.

Wu said the real troubling issue with bills such as SB 147 is that those bills "would basically be the government announcing to the public that you know Asian people are dangerous, and that you should do something about it".

"And we have real concerns that more targeted attacks would come if they pass bills like SB 147."

History has proved that the danger Yeh and Wu are worried about is real. Laws targeting a specific group — by race or by country — would often fan hatred and violence against that particular targeted group. Horrendous crimes were committed after the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed.

Brutal massacre

In September 1885, three years after Congress enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act, close to 30 immigrant Chinese were massacred in Rock Springs, Wyoming, according to history.com.

In this racially motivated killing, 150 white miners killed 28 Chinese miners, wounded 15 others and drove a few hundred of them out of town. In the end, only 45 white miners were fired by the railroad company, but none of the perpetrators ever faced any legal action for the killings.

"The Chinese had been victims of prejudice and violence ever since they first began to come to the West in the mid-19th century, fleeing famine and political upheaval," said a history article about the massacre on the website.

"Widely blamed for all sorts of social ills, the Chinese were also singled out for attack by some national politicians who popularized strident slogans like 'The Chinese Must Go' and helped pass an 1882 law that closed the US to any further Chinese immigration.

"In this climate of racial hatred, violent attacks against the Chinese in the West became all too common, though the Rock Springs massacre was notable both for its size and savage brutality," the article said, explaining the background of the massacre.

Two years later in May 1887, in a course of two days, a group of seven horse thieves, all of them white, ambushed and attacked Chinese miners with firearms in an isolated part of northeast Oregon, killing 31 to 34 immigrant Chinese.

Afterward, the horse thieves mutilated their bodies, dumped them into the Snake River, stole their mined gold, and burned their camp and equipment. The crime was not discovered until the battered bodies of the Chinese began appearing in the Snake River 65 miles (105 km) from the crime scene.

Just like in the Wyoming massacre, though the identity of the seven killers was known, none was convicted or punished. Soon the case was forgotten until the file was rediscovered in a safe that had been donated to a local county museum in 1995.

A local judge told The Associated Press in 1995 that "the records were more than just lost, they seem to have been hidden. Somebody intentionally tried to keep this story from happening".

Keenly aware that those discriminative laws could fuel hatred and violence toward Asian Americans, Wu said that even if SB 147 does not pass in Texas, the anti-Asian hate fear is a real thing.

"We should start discussing what we need to do (with anti-Asian hate)" after the Texas legislation session ends at the end of this month, he told the Chinese American community.

Chinese Canadians want ancestors' sacrifices to be recognized

By **RENA LI** in Toronto
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July 1 will mark 100 years since the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in Canada, and the descendants of Chinese railroad workers in Canada are calling to proclaim this July 1 as Chinese People's Railway Day.

At a news conference on Monday, Landy Anderson, chair of the Foundation to Commemorate the Chinese Railroad Workers in Canada, said the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act is vitally important to commemorate.

"Most Canadians refer to July 1 as Canada Day, which the Chinese community refers to as 'Humiliation Day'. We're asking every capital city of the national provinces to proclaim July 1 as Chinese People's Railway Day. That's our campaign on July 1 this year," Anderson said.

After the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway, or CPR, was completed in 1885, the Canadian government imposed a punitive head tax to deter Chinese citizens from coming to Canada. Construction of the western stretch of the railway had the most daunting conditions and it was largely built by Chinese workers.

Raising the tax twice was not enough to stop the Chinese, so the Canadian government turned to legislation to formally institutionalize racism — the Chinese Immigration Act, also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act, in 1923.

"You can't talk about the railway without the head tax, and the head tax was designed specifically to keep Chinese people out of Canada," said Anderson, who is the granddaughter of a head tax payer and Chinese railroad worker.

The Chinese pioneers who came to Canada in the 1880s to help build the railroad united Canada from coast to coast politically, geographically and economically, and the foundation calls them nation builders.

Of the 17,000 men who came from Guangdong province in South China, more than 4,000 died because of unsafe working conditions, landslides and premature blastings.

"Canada recruited them here; our first prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald recruited the Chinese people specifically to build the railway because they worked stronger, faster, harder, more efficiently," Anderson said.

"Can you imagine how hard (it was) to build a railway system in the late 1800s with the absence of technology? Can you imagine what our ancestors went through? And the discrimination they faced in the anti-Chinese society? They faced significant racism because we were a threat?"

People pay tribute to Chinese veterans on April 22, 2018, during a Special Council Meeting where Gregor Robertson, then-Vancouver mayor, officially apologized to the Chinese community for historical discrimination, in Vancouver, Canada. YU RUIDONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

After the railway was completed in November 1885, those Chinese people who were recruited were homeless, destitute and drifting along the tracks. They had no jobs and could not speak English. Some of them started operating laundries and Chinese restaurants.

"So, if you think about our Chinese ancestors and their bloodline, how many descendants are here and prospering in Canada today for Canada's economic success?" Anderson said.

Reverberating impact

The Chinese Exclusion Act banned Chinese immigrants for 24 years until it was repealed in 1947. During the exclusionary period, many wives and children in China were separated from the Chinese men in Canada. The impact of the act reverberates through Chinese families and communities to this day.

On June 22, 2006, then-Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper said the construction of the railroad was a nation-building enterprise. He formally apologized for the unjust legislation of the Chinese Exclusion Act and compensated the living head tax payers and their spouses.

"So, our goal at the foundation is to help everybody remember and recognize the Chinese labor, blood, sweat and tears and the 4,000 Chinese loggers that were lost during the building of the CPR," Anderson said.

The provincial capital cities of British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ottawa have sent the foundation support letters to proclaim July 1 as Chinese People's Railway Day.

On May 14, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued a statement to mark 100 years since the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923.

"The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 … was a dark time in Canada's history that has lasting impacts today," the statement said. "This systemic discrimination and racist policy separated loved ones, impoverished families and reinforced prejudice against people of Chinese origin in Canada — scars that would endure for generations."

WORLD

Asia summit aims to revive trade routes

Meet reinvigorates ancient Silk Road and deepens mutual trust, experts say

By REN QI in Almaty, Kazakhstan, XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong and CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels

The China-Central Asia Summit is reinvigorating the ancient Silk Road with the high-quality green Belt and Road Initiative that features joint contribution and shared benefits, international analysts say.

Khalid Taimur Akram, executive director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future, Islamabad, said the summit hopes to revive these old trade routes and advance contemporary economic and commercial cooperation. Xi'an city represents the historical interactions and thriving commercial activity along the Silk Road as it is also the starting point of the historic trade route, the Pakistani expert said.

Akram added that China wants to see a dynamic and prosperous Central Asia that will support people in the region in realizing their aspirations for a better life and provide a significant boost to global economic recovery.

S.L. Kanthan, a geopolitical analyst based in Bengaluru, India, reminded that more than 2,000 years ago, Xi'an — also known as Chang'an — was the origin of the famed Silk Road, which linked Chinese merchants to those in Central Asia, Persia and the Roman Empire.

According to him, the ancient Silk Road could be viewed as the genesis of globalization and free trade, and its contemporary version is the BRI, the largest infrastructure project in human history.

"Obviously, the Central Asian countries are pivotal to the BRI since they act as China's gateway to the Middle East and beyond to Europe," the analyst added.

Shavkat Alimbekov, a researcher at the International Institute for Central Asia in Uzbekistan, said the summit would outline a new plan for the development of mutually beneficial relations for the future, and open a new era of cooperation.

He said the summit will continue to deepen strategic mutual trust between China and the Central Asian countries, which are friendly neighbors and strategic partners.

"One of the key aspects of this cooperation is the Green Silk Road program, which focuses on using green development strategies, innovative solutions and advanced technologies to achieve environmental efficiency and sustainability," he said.

Serik Korzhumbayev, editor-in-chief of the Kazakhstan newspaper DKnews, said he believes the summit will enhance long-term cooperation and development across multiple fields between the six countries, adding that "a new format of cooperation will make it possible to involve the Central Asian region with China's large market in close economic ties".

Common progress

"China has now become an important partner in trade and economic cooperation of the five countries," said Tursunali Kuziev, professor at the Journalism and Mass Communications University of Uzbekistan, adding that innovation and exchange in agricultural sciences have constantly pushed forward common progress in this field.

Sheradil Baktygulov, foreign affairs consultant at the Kyrgyz National Institute for Strategic Studies, said China deserves great respect and support for contributing to relations of peace, friendship and cooperation in Central Asia and for advocating mutually beneficial cooperation and peaceful development among all countries.

Mominul Islam, CEO at IPDC Finance in Bangladesh, said during his participation at the annual meeting of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific, or ADFIAP, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, that China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative has brought opportunities to Central Asia.

The summit has significant meanings to the region, as all five presidents from Central Asia participated, Islam said. He said the cooperation has been growing fast and the potential for deepening connections could be seen in various fields.

Nikolai Podguzov, chairman of the Eurasian Development Bank management board, said China is important to the whole Central Asian region. China has attached great importance to cooperation with Central Asia as well as the latter's potential, he said.

Central Asia is a fast-developing region, which has vowed to tap into energy efficiency, connectivity, food production, and other industries. The summit in Xi'an is set to solve some global and regional problems, boost mutual benefit for the economy, and strengthen cooperation both in the region and all over the world, Podguzov said.

Contact the writers at vivienxu@chinadailyapac.com.

Blaze control

Firefighters work to contain a fire at a historic post office building in the Philippine capital Manila on Monday. Seven people were injured. The fire started before midnight in the basement of the neoclassical five-story building and was brought under control on Monday morning. XINHUA

Cambodia lauds BRI for promoting development

SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia — Cambodia celebrated the 10th anniversary of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, highlighting its great contributions to the kingdom's socioeconomic development and poverty reduction.

Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen and Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Wang Wentian attended the celebration event, which was held at the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, or SSEZ, a flagship project of the BRI.

Hun Sen said under the BRI, many megaprojects, including roads, bridges, ports, power plants, expressways, special economic zones, airports, and stadiums have been carried out in Cambodia. "The BRI has greatly benefited not only Cambodia, but also the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) as well as other participating countries," he said at the event attended by more than 24,000 workers from 175 factories in the SSEZ.

The BRI, which consists of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, was proposed by China in 2013 with the aim of building trade and infrastructure networks connecting Asia with Europe and Africa on and beyond the ancient Silk Road trade routes.

Over the past decade, 151 countries and 32 international organizations have signed documents under the BRI framework.

Hun Sen said the BRI was designed to promote common peace, development and economic prosperity of the countries in the region and the world.

"It has provided mutually beneficial cooperation and win-win results for all," he added.

As 2023 marks the 65th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Cambodia and China, Hun Sen said the bilateral ties have reached the highest ever in history, noting that the "ironclad friendship" between the two countries is "unbreakable."

Meanwhile, Ambassador Wang said the SSEZ, the largest industrial zone in Cambodia in terms of size and occupancy, is a model project of practical cooperation between China and Cambodia under the BRI.

"This special economic zone has become the locomotive of economic growth in Sihanoukville province and provided 'golden rice bowl' jobs for local residents," he said.

At the event, Hun Sen also officially inaugurated the $300-million General Tire Technology (Cambodia) plant, a subsidiary of Chinese tire maker Jiangsu General Science Technology and a newcomer to the SSEZ.

XINHUA

Tea helps to sip taste of life, says China's UN envoy

By MINLU ZHANG at the United Nations
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When examining the Chinese character for tea, the composition consists of three parts: grass on top, people in the middle, and wood at the bottom. The character depicts "people living in nature", explained China's top envoy to the United Nations.

"(Tea) helps us sip the taste of life, enjoy the spiritual tranquillity, evoke enlightenment, and bring our heart and soul back to mother nature. For thousands of years, the sustainable cycle from tea planting to tea drinking has been a vivid example of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature," Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, said on Friday in his opening remarks on the celebration of International Tea Day.

In December 2019, the 74th session of the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing May 21 as International Tea Day.

After three years of COVID-19, the Permanent Mission of China to the UN held the first in-person celebration for the event at the UN headquarters in New York on Friday.

Zhang said he hoped the face-to-face exchanges would "not only enhance our friendship, but also explore the intrinsic link between tea and human development, and seek common development and a shared future".

The tea boom and its related drinking products and industries create many jobs and much economic value, said Zhang, adding that tea is a bond between civilizations, and the development of tea culture is "an epitome of mutual learning between human civilizations", he said.

From the ancient Silk Road to the Tea-Horse Road and the Belt and Road Initiative, tea has transcended time and borders and promoted mutual understanding and friendship among people, and diverse and harmonious coexistence among civilizations, Zhang said.

"In today's challenge-ridden world, we wish to use tea as a medium to promote international exchange and cooperation, enhance mutual learning, mutual understanding and mutual trust among civilizations, and achieve harmonious coexistence," he said.

Participants taste specialty tea from China's Quanzhou at a tea-themed cultural salon in New York on Saturday. WANG YILING / XINHUA

UN representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan and other countries said tea is a key driver for social and economic development. They said tea is an effective means to help less developed regions eradicate poverty, increase farmers' income and empower women.

"I enjoy drinking tea, and my favorite Chinese tea is Longjing tea. It's a kind of green tea, which is very nice to drink in the summer when it's hot. And in winter, I prefer to drink Pu'er tea. It makes me feel very relaxed and happy," Ivaylo, a staff member at the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the UN, told China Daily.

"I love tea ceremonies. I think Chinese tea culture is a great cultural asset that China can use and does use around the world."

Online See more by scanning the code.

Girl's death exposes medical inadequacies at US border

SAN DIEGO — The recent deaths of an 8-year-old Panamanian girl and a 17-year-old boy from Honduras who were under US government supervision have again raised questions about how prepared authorities are to handle medical emergencies suffered by migrants arriving in the US, especially as agencies struggle with massive overcrowding at facilities along the southern border.

Anadith Tanay Reyes Alvarez became unresponsive on what was at least a third visit to medics Wednesday at a Border Patrol station in Harlingen, Texas, and died later in a hospital, US Customs and Border Protection said. The girl had complained that day of vomiting and stomach pain.

She died on her family's ninth day in custody; the most time allowed is 72 hours under agency policy.

The family told agents that the girl had a history of heart problems and sickle cell anemia, the CBP acknowledged in its second statement on the death. She was diagnosed with influenza on the family's sixth day in custody.

The CBP published a detailed account on Sunday, confirming key aspects of what the girl's mother said two days earlier in an interview with The Associated Press. It initially published only a brief statement.

A migrant holds out his arms appealing to Texas National Guardsmen in Matamoros, Mexico, on May 11. FERNANDO LLANO / AP

Mabel Alvarez Benedicks told the AP that agents repeatedly ignored pleas to hospitalize her medically fragile daughter as she felt pain in her bones, struggled to breathe and was unable to walk. She said her daughter was finally taken in an ambulance after falling limp and unconscious and bleeding from the mouth.

Agents said her daughter's diagnosis of influenza did not require hospital care, according to the mother.

The girl's death came a week after 17-year-old Angel Eduardo Maradiaga Espinoza of Honduras died in US Health and Human Services Department's custody. He was traveling alone.

A rush to the border before pandemic-related asylum limits known as Title 42 expired brought extraordinary pressure. The Border Patrol took an average of 10,100 people into custody a day in the second week of May compared to a daily average of 5,200 in March.

The Border Patrol had 28,717 people in custody on May 10, one day before pandemic asylum restrictions expired, according to a court filing. By Sunday, the custody count dropped 23 percent to 22,259, still historically high.

The custody capacity is about 17,000, according to a government document last year, and the administration has been adding temporary giant tents like one in San Diego that opened in January with room for about 500 people.

Meanwhile, the FBI and Tohono O'odham Nation police are investigating the fatal shooting of a tribal member by US Border Patrol agents in southern Arizona.

Customs and Border Protection officials said agents from the Ajo Border Patrol station were involved in a fatal shooting on the Tohono O'odham reservation near Ajo around 10 pm Thursday.

They said the incident is under review by Customs and Border Protection's Office of Professional Responsibility. But they haven't released any additional information.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Israeli minister's visit to holy site sparks condemnations

JERUSALEM — Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on Sunday, drawing condemnations from the Palestinians.

The visit came three days after Ben-Gvir and tens of thousands of Jewish nationalists marched through the Old City and just over a week into a fragile Gaza cease-fire, Agence France-Presse reported.

Escorted by heavy police and the internal Shin Bet security agency, Ben-Gvir visited the compound in the early morning hours, according to a video statement released by his office.

He said he was glad to come up to the compound, and thanked the police officers at the site.

Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said in a statement that the visit is "a blatant attack" on the holy site.

The Jordanian Foreign Ministry on Sunday condemned Ben-Gvir's "incursion" into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Ben-Gvir's visit is a provocative step and a grave violation that leads to escalation, the ministry's spokesperson Sinan Al-Majali said in a statement.

Egypt on Sunday condemned Ben-Gvir's visit to the mosque compound. "Such provocative behavior is inconsistent with the wisdom and responsibility of officials," the Egyptian foreign ministry said in a statement.

Egypt also called on Israel to immediately stop the practices that fuel tensions in the occupied territories of Palestine.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound has been administered by the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, a Jordanian body, since 1948.

It is the second time that Ben-Gvir, the ultranationalist leader of the Jewish Power party, visited the site since he became a member of the Israeli coalition government. The government, the most far-right in Israel's history, was inaugurated last December.

The compound is a sensitive site in East Jerusalem holy to both Muslims and Jews and a longtime focal point of tensions between Israelis and Palestinians.

Israel gained control of East Jerusalem during the 1967 Middle East war and occupied it despite international criticism. Under a long-held status quo, the site is administrated by the Jordanian Waqf, allowing only Muslim worship.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

WORLD

Briefly

CHINA

President of DR Congo to visit China

President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo will pay a state visit to China starting from Wednesday, the Foreign Ministry has announced. During his six-day tour, President Xi Jinping will hold talks with the DR Congo's president and they will jointly attend a signing ceremony of cooperation documents, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said. Premier Li Qiang and top Chinese legislator Zhao Leji will meet with him respectively, she said. China believes that the visit will inject new impetus into the development of bilateral relations, Mao said.

UNITED STATES

Biden, McCarthy to meet on debt ceiling

US President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy were set to meet at the White House at a pivotal moment as Washington works to strike a budget compromise and raise the nation's borrowing limit in time to avert a devastating federal default. The meeting on Monday afternoon between the Democratic president and the new Republican speaker was expected to be critical as they race to prevent a looming debt crisis. After a weekend of start-stop talks, both appeared upbeat as they face a deadline, as soon as June 1. Biden and McCarthy spoke by phone on Sunday while the president was returning home after the Group of Seven summit in Japan.

ITALY

Activists turn Rome's Trevi Fountain black

Climate activists in Italy turned Rome's famous Trevi Fountain black on Sunday, saying floods that have killed 14 people in the country's northeast were "a warning". Activists from the anti-climate change organization Last Generation climbed onto the landmark and poured a vegetable-based carbon liquid into it, before being pulled out and escorted away by police. The Trevi Fountain's most iconic moment saw Swedish actress Anita Ekberg go for a dip in Federico Fellini's film *La Dolce Vita*. The protest came as Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni arrived in Emilia-Romagna to visit areas devastated by floods.

AGENCIES—CHINA DAILY

Irreparable damage

Palestinians inspect a damaged building following an Israeli army raid in the Balata refugee camp near the West Bank town of Nablus on Monday. Palestinian health officials say Israeli fire has killed at least three people in the refugee camp. MAJDI MOHAMMED / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chinese development model applauded

By WANG QINGYUN
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China's development model is an alternative that shows modernization does not necessarily mean Westernization, former Romanian prime minister Adrian Nastase said.

Chinese modernization sends a message that "each country should seek its own modernization according to its own needs", Nastase told China Daily.

"For countries like mine, modernization meant Westernization," Nastase said. "But later on, we understood … that sometimes it is much more important to have your own line of development, to think about the features of your country, traditions, culture."

Characterized by features that are unique to the Chinese context, Chinese modernization involves a huge population, aims at common prosperity for all, focuses on both material and cultural-ethical advancement, underlines harmony between humanity and nature, and pursues peaceful development.

Over the past several decades, China has grown in leaps and bounds through its own pattern of development. The special pattern has been met with not only praise, but also doubt.

Adrian Nastase

Some accuse the world's second-largest economy of being a "threat". Some even hype the possibility of a "Thucydides trap", or a clash between powers, lying ahead for China.

Concerned by the claims, Nastase said the media and politicians in the United States and some European countries tend to perceive China as an enemy.

Such a misperception is "very dangerous", he said. "China, in my opinion, is not interested in a war," Nastase said.

Impressed by China's growth, including its achievement in poverty eradication, Nastase stressed that different civilizations must coexist, and that dialogue is essential for avoiding a "clash of civilizations".

His opinion is similar to what China has called for.

Advocating for equality and inclusiveness of civilizations, China has supported mutual learning and exchanges among civilizations to promote common progress, and has opposed a "cookie-cutter" approach to the development of different countries.

China's values, ideas and traditions need to be better understood in other parts of the world, where many countries have considered modernization the same as Westernization, Nastase said.

Nastase also shared his view on the Belt and Road Initiative.

Calling the initiative "the project of the century" that translates globalization into action, Nastase said the BRI's connection of infrastructures around the world is essential for trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges.

Nastase hopes there will be more BRI cooperation projects carried out in his country, which signed a memorandum of understanding on BRI cooperation with China in 2015.

Nastase served as Romanian prime minister from 2000 to 2004. He made a visit to China at the height of the SARS outbreak in May 2003.

During that trip, Nastase brought some medical equipment with him to show his support for China's fight against SARS. He also expressed hope for strengthened cooperation between the two countries.

Huge progress has taken place in China since his trip two decades ago, not only in China's urban landscape but also in the way its people behave, Nastase said.

Russia calls G7 incubator for 'hysteria'

Zelensky lobbies for support as claims on Bakhmut from Moscow, Kyiv vary

MOSCOW — Russia on Sunday dismissed the G7 summit in Japan's Hiroshima as a "politicized" event that it said had pumped out anti-Russian and anti-Chinese statements and accused the group of undermining global stability.

Moscow lashed out after the Western leaders said they would not back down from supporting Ukraine, in a warning to Moscow as it claimed to have taken the eastern city of Bakhmut, something Kyiv denied.

In a statement posted on Telegram, the Russian Foreign Ministry said the G7 had "irreversibly deteriorated" and the forum had become "an 'incubator' where, under the leadership of the Anglo-Saxons, destructive initiatives that undermine global stability are prepared".

The statement accused the G7 of fanning anti-Russian and anti-Chinese "hysteria".

Russia used to be a member of the G7 club of industrialized countries, which was previously known as the G8, until Moscow was excluded after Crimea joined Russia through a referendum in 2014.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was present at the Hiroshima summit as a guest, an opportunity he used to encourage member nations to maintain arms supplies and diplomatic support for Kyiv amid its conflict with Russia.

He leveraged the powerful symbolism of Hiroshima, synonymous with the horrors of war, to press partners and skeptics alike to back his defense against Russia's 15-month special military operation, Agence France-Presse commented.

On the battlefield, Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of Russia's Wagner paramilitary military group, said in a video message posted on his Telegram channel that Wagner will begin to withdraw its units on May 25 for rest and retraining, and its fighters will create "the necessary lines of defense".

"(Russian President) Vladimir Putin congratulates the Wagner assault detachments, as well as all servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces units … on the completion of the operation to liberate Artyomovsk," the presidential press service said.

Zelensky denied that Russian troops now occupy Bakhmut, although he acknowledged they were in the city, which has been ground into ruins in months of brutal fighting that shows little sign of slowing.

He left Japan with reassurances, however, that his allies will see out the fight, with US President Joe Biden insisting that Ukraine's backers "will not waver".

Military package

The White House earlier unveiled a $375-million package of US aid that includes ammunition for HIMARS rocket launchers, artillery shells, anti-tank guided missiles and thermal imaging systems.

It came after the United States lifted a veto on Ukrainian access to advanced US-made F-16 fighter jets, a significant upgrade from Kyiv's Cold War-era fleet of MiGs and Sukhois.

The transfer of F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine would raise the question of NATO's involvement in the conflict, Russia's Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said in remarks published early on Monday.

The Russian Foreign Ministry, in the same statement, accused the G7 of "flirting" with non-Western states in an effort to stymie the development of their ties with Moscow and Beijing.

It said it was convinced though that the forum was incapable of reflecting the interests of the Asia-Pacific region, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa or Latin America.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Wide 'web'

Fishermen use colorful fishing nets on Matla River in the Canning town of India's West Bengal state on Sunday. The town is located about 100 kilometers from the state's capital Kolkata. AVISHEK DAS / NEWSCOM

Greek PM in big lead, seeking new vote

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels
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Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, whose party won Sunday's election albeit short of a majority, said on Monday he would not form a coalition government and hoped for a new election.

Mitsotakis made the comments to President Katerina Sakellaropoulou, who formally offered him an opportunity to form a coalition under the constitution.

Mitsotakis' New Democracy party won 41 percent of the vote, or 146 seats in the 300-seat parliament, five seats short of a majority.

Mitsotakis told supporters that a "great victory surpassed our own expectations" and the result showed that Greeks have given the party a mandate for a four-year government.

"The people wanted the choice of a Greece run by a majority government and by New Democracy without the help of others," he said in a victory speech.

"We will move forward, boldly and steadily, to complete today's important first step, and be the final winners," he said, adding that Greeks "want a strong government".

The biggest rival, left-wing Syriza party led by former prime minister Alexis Tsipras, won only 20 percent of the vote, or 71 seats.

Tsipras said he had called Mitsotakis to congratulate him on the win, but he has also not given up, saying that "the electoral cycle is not over yet", adding that the next battle will be "critical and final".

Pasok, another socialist party, came in third by winning 11.5 percent of the vote, or 41 seats.

Voter turnout was 60.92 percent, according to the Ministry of Interior.

Starting from Monday, Sakellaropoulou will offer three days each to the three leading parties in parliament to form a coalition government. But it seems unlikely for Syriza and Pasok to succeed given Sunday's results.

If that process fails, a senior judge will be named interim prime minister and call for new elections, which could happen as early as June 25.

Under a new electoral law that comes into play in the next election, the winner can obtain a bonus of up to 50 seats, which now looks set for New Democracy based on the results.

New Democracy has ruled Greece for the last four years. The country's economic growth of 6 percent last year was among the strongest in the European Union, almost double the EU's average rate.

Sunday's victory was widely viewed as a win for Mitsotakis, whose government has suffered attacks from a wiretapping scandal and a deadly train collision causing more than 50 deaths and ensuing public outrage in February.

Mitsotakis, 55, comes from one of Greece's most powerful political dynasties. His father Konstantinos Mitsotakis was prime minister from 1990 to 1993; his sister Dora Bakoyannis was foreign minister from 2006 to 2009 and her son Kostas Bakoyannis is the current mayor of Athens.

Agencies contributed to this story.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SOLARIZATION OF PAKISTAN RAILWAYS

FOR 100% INVESTMENT, DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING, O&M ACROSS PAKISTAN VIA POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT (PPA) OF 25 YEARS

Pakistan Railways (PR) is considering Solarization of its network spread across Pakistan under the Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) (Amendment Act 2021) through Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Rule 36(b) Single Stage Two Envelope, for 25 years on Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) Mode. The tentative capacity of solar systems (On-Grid / Hybrid) to be installed over the Pakistan Railway infrastructure is approximately 45 MW. The package distribution is:

Sr. #	Packages (Division)	Locations	Tentative Load (MW)	Bid Security
1	Package - 1	Peshawar Division	3	PKR 2.5 Million
2	Package - 2	Rawalpindi Division	5	PKR 3.0 Million
3	Package - 3	Lahore Division	20	PKR 10 Million
4	Package - 4	Multan Division	4	PKR 2.5 Million
5	Package - 5	Sukkur Division	5	PKR 3.0 Million
6	Package - 6	Quetta Division	3	PKR 2.5 Million
7	Package - 7	Karachi Division	5	PKR 3.0 Million

Pakistan Railways is inviting Technically & Financially sound, well reputed national/international firms and Joint Ventures (JV) to undertake the project on Public Private Partnership (PPP) / BOOT Mode for twenty five (25) years.

1. National Firms participating individually or as JV shall be registered with Securities Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), FBR (i.e. the NTN certificate) and AEDB.
2. International firms participating individually or as JV shall be registered with Board of Investment (BOI) or any other registration authority of respective country.
3. Firms/JV can apply for single, multiple or all packages by submitting separate proposals for each package. Proposal for each package will be dealt as separate tender.
4. Interested firms, JV can purchase bidding documents from undersigned office during working hours against written request and payment of PKR 5,000 non-refundable fee (for each package) in cash.
5. Pre Bid meeting will be held on **8th June, 2023**, in the committee room No.1, Pakistan Railways Headquarters Office, Lahore at **11:00 PST**.
6. All interested firms shall submit bid security as stated above against each packages in the form of CDR / Bank Guarantee in favor of FA & CAO/PR, Pakistan Railways Headquarters Office, Empress Road, Lahore Pakistan.
7. Bidding documents completed in all respect must reach the address mentioned below not later than **24th June, 2023, upto 11:00 PST.** Technical proposals will be opened on the same day at the same venue at **12:00 PST** in presence of bidders/representatives who choose to attend.
8. Further information/clarification may be obtained from the undersigned on any working day during working hours.

Mr. Shafqat Jamal | Chief Electrical Engineer,
Pakistan Railways, Headquarters Office, Lahore - Pakistan, E-mail: cee@pakrail.gov.pk
Ph# +92-42- 99201690, 042-99201803, Website: http://www.pakrail.gov.pk

Regulator stresses tighter insurance supervision

NAFR underlines healthy solvency adequacy ratio, prevention of risk

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
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Supervision over the insurance industry, especially over insurers' solvency, should be further strengthened to firmly safeguard the bottom line of preventing systemic financial risks, said the newly unveiled National Administration of Financial Regulation.

The NAFR, which was formed on the basis of the former China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission and launched on Thursday, made the above comments at its first work conference.

By the end of the first quarter, the average comprehensive solvency adequacy ratio of the reviewed 185 insurance companies was 190.3 percent, with the average core solvency adequacy ratio reaching 125.7 percent, said the NAFR.

The minimum solvency adequacy ratio for insurance companies is set at 100 percent in China. The regulator will require the insurer to suspend all businesses once the ratio drops below the 100-percent level.

At the end of 2022, the average comprehensive solvency adequacy ratio of Chinese insurance companies was 196 percent.

The decline in insurers' solvency adequacy ratio has narrowed significantly and remains within a reasonable range, the NAFR said at its meeting.

The average comprehensive solvency adequacy ratios of property insurance companies, life insurance companies and reinsurance companies were 227.1 percent, 180.9 percent and 277.7 percent, respectively, by the end of the first quarter.

Meanwhile, the insurance industry is showing better-than-expected growth in the first quarter, with the insurance premium income up by 9.2 percent year-on-year to 1.95 trillion yuan ($280 billion) in the first quarter. The annualized comprehensive investment yield of insurance funds was 5.24 percent, showing a positive trend of recovery, said the NAFR.

While the minimum capital requirement for insurers is set at 2.47 trillion yuan, the actual capital was 4.7 trillion yuan by the end of the first quarter, according to NAFR data.

According to Fitch Ratings, smaller and weaker life and nonlife insurers in China are likely to seek additional capital this year to support their solvency positions after organic growth in capital weakened in 2022 due to the global market volatility.

But China's optimized COVID-19 control measures since December, the gradual recovery of its economy and better consumer sentiment will boost insurers' growth momentum this year, Fitch Ratings said.

Market insiders said that Chinese life insurance companies' assumed interest rate will be lowered in June, although the rate was once set at 3.5 percent. The former CBIRC's industry research in March to find out the cost of debt of insurance companies is considered a signal to lower the rate.

Zheng Xinru, a researcher at Zhixin Investment, said the expected lowering will push the assumed interest rate to adapt to market changes, as the five-year bond yield now is 3.12 percent and the five-year deposit rate is set below 3 percent, both of which are quite low compared to historical data.

Fang Guobing, a researcher at the Shanghai National Accounting Institute, said the declining assumed interest rate helps enhance insurance companies' solvency in light of the current macroeconomic situation and the market interest rates. The new policies will further regulate insurance companies' product design and marketing, preventing insurers from passing on high-risk investments to policyholders, he said.

A view of CNOOC Guanlan, China's first deep-sea floating wind power platform. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

CNOOC links deep-sea wind power to Hainan oil field grid

By **LIU YUKUN**
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China National Offshore Oil Corp said over the weekend its CNOOC Guanlan, China's first deep-sea floating wind power platform, successfully connected to the power grid in Wenchang oil field in Hainan province.

This marks new progress in providing green power for use in offshore oil production, CNOOC said.

Guanlan is Chinese for "watching waves". Installed at an offshore oil field located 136 kilometers from Wenchang, CNOOC Guanlan has an installed capacity of 7.25 megawatts. With a total height exceeding 200 meters and a draft weight of 11,000 metric tons, CNOOC Guanlan is anchored in the deep ocean at a depth of 120 meters with the help of nine anchor chains.

CNOOC said the green electricity generated by the platform is routed to the grid in Wenchang oil field through a 5-kilometer-long dynamic submarine cable. After its operationalization, the platform will generate 22 million kilowatt-hours of electricity on average annually. The electricity thus generated will be used to supply power to the oil field for its own operations. The platform will save nearly 10 million cubic meters of natural gas and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 22,000 tons per year.

According to Tang Xinguo, director of the Wenchang 13-2 oil field at CNOOC's Zhanjiang branch, CNOOC Guanlan is China's first floating wind power platform that is located more than 100 kilometers from the coastline and in water depths exceeding 100 meters.

During its design and construction, the platform conducted comprehensive studies on environment and technological innovation in wind power facilities, to ensure safe and stable operation even under the impact of strong typhoons.

Yang Yun, executive vice-president of CNOOC, said that with the installation of CNOOC Guanlan, the company hopes to help promote the development of China's floating wind power in deep-sea areas, especially in terms of core technology, large-scale offshore installation equipment and resource management along the industrial chain.

"By building zero-carbon oil and gas fields in deep-sea areas, we hope to realize green and low-carbon offshore oil and gas production and promote the integration of oil and gas with new energies," Yang said.

China has abundant wind energy resources in deep-ocean areas. According to data from the National Climate Center, China's technical exploitable capacity of deep-sea wind resources exceeds 2 billion kilowatts, indicating great potential for exploration.

CNOOC said the development and utilization of offshore wind power resources are considered one of the most effective ways to help achieve China's decarbonization goals.

The establishment of offshore oil field power system is vital for the operation of offshore oil and gas platforms, as a significant amount of electricity as well as stable power supply are required for daily production activities, CNOOC said.

The company said that currently, both domestic and international offshore oil fields rely on fossil fuels for electricity. However, wind power generation offers a greener alternative for electricity supply to deep-sea oil field clusters. Nevertheless, uncertainty in wind power supply poses higher challenges to the task of maintaining stable power supply to offshore oil and gas platforms.

To ensure continuous and stable operation of the power grid in oil fields after wind power is connected to it, the Wenchang oil field has developed a new power supply model that integrates wind power generation with power generated from gas and smart grids. The new model coordinates four fossil fuel power generators with CNOOC Guanlan to better manage power generation for a steady supply of electricity.

Qin Lifeng, production manager of CNOOC's Zhanjiang branch, said the power grid in Wenchang oil field represents an attempt by CNOOC to establish a new type of green and low-carbon power system at sea.

On the one hand, it meets the high stability requirements for power supply at offshore oil and gas fields by coordinating multiple power generators at an oil field.

On the other hand, it takes a crucial step forward by connecting large-capacity renewable energy generators to the grid, which facilitates the high-proportion utilization of new energy electricity in offshore oil and gas fields.

Tech PE plan to lift returns of liquor firms

By **CHENG YU**
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Plans recently put in place by a group of leading Chinese liquor makers, including the country's largest liquor producer Kweichow Moutai, to set up private equity investment funds — with a major focus on the tech sectors — reflect a cross-boundary trend of diversifying investments by traditional consumption giants in order to boost financial returns, experts said.

Kweichow Moutai said last week that it would set up two investment funds with a cumulative capital of more than 10 billion yuan ($1.4 billion). The new investments would focus on cutting-edge information technology sectors, such as biotechnology, new energy, new materials and high-end equipment, different from previous investments that mainly focused on the consumption industry.

The two funds, of 5.51 billion yuan each, will be co-operated with China Merchants Capital and Goldstone Investment, a PE arm of China Merchants Group and CITIC Securities.

Meanwhile, Sichuan-based Wuliangye Yibin Co Ltd and Jiangsu-based Jiangsu Yanghe Distillery Co Ltd have also jumped on the bandwagon of private equity investments, with semiconductor, medical care and new materials among major focus areas.

"It has been a trend recently for traditional companies to become limited partners and do CVC, or corporate venture capital, investment, which mainly refers to the investment of corporate funds directly in external firms," said Kong Xiaolong, founding partner of private equity service platform Fofweekly.

"As these companies have stable cash flow and investment returns in their own sectors, they tend to do cross-boundary investments in emerging sectors like tech, to diversify their financial returns," Kong said.

Moutai said in a statement that it would use its own funds and leverage professional investment institutions to increase the rate of return and create value for shareholders.

According to Moutai's financial report for fiscal year 2022, its cash and cash equivalents balance were more than 152 billion yuan as of last year. The company's stock has been one of the most valuable for investors in the country.

Xiao Bing, executive partner of investment firm Fortune Capital, said in a conference earlier this month that hard technology would become a top investment area for investors this year as China aims to boost its technological prowess.

Start with a good 'end'

Construction workers ready the ground at the exit of Xujiapo Tunnel for the upcoming tunneling project on the Kangyu section of the Xi'an-Chongqing high-speed railway in Chongqing on Friday. With a length of 4.8 kilometers and a maximum depth of 280 meters, it will go through the underground part of a tunnel on a highway. Xujiapo Tunnel is a double-rail one listed as a key project in the building of the railway section. Spanning Chongqing, Sichuan province and Shaanxi province, the Xi'an-Chongqing high-speed railway aims to play a big role in boosting integrated regional development and facilitate trips for inland provinces' passengers bound for Beijing and the Shaanxi provincial capital. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

HIGHER GROUND

Siemens Healthineers to invest 1b yuan in new unit

By **ZHOU MO**
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Siemens Healthineers, a German healthcare equipment provider, is betting big on China's innovation and manufacturing capacity.

On Monday, it announced it will invest an additional 1 billion yuan ($142 million) or more to set up a new research and production site in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, marking its second such facility in the southern metropolis.

"China is of elementary importance for Siemens Healthineers. Through its technology savviness and openness to partnerships and innovation, China is already, and will continue to be, a strategic innovation driver for us locally as well as globally," said Bernd Montag, CEO of the company.

He made the remarks in Shenzhen on Monday during a signing ceremony for strategic collaboration between the company's Shenzhen base called Siemens Shenzhen Magnetic Resonance Ltd and the Nanshan district of Shenzhen, to build the site.

Noting that China is an "important and dynamic" market, Montag said the country is also becoming an increasingly important source of innovation and creativity.

Wang Hao, president of Siemens Healthineers Greater China, said the company's latest investments in Shenzhen demonstrate its determination and confidence in the Chinese market.

The company will further enhance local production and R&D capabilities in China to cultivate a comprehensive local innovation ecosystem, he said.

Siemens Healthineers entered Shenzhen in 2002. Its Shenzhen base has become one of the largest research and manufacturing centers of the company, with business operations covering magnetic resonance systems, angiography systems and medical electronic components.

A cumulative 8,000 units of complete equipment have been shipped from the Shenzhen base to over 100 countries and regions so far. Localization rate of product components at the Shenzhen base has reached about 80 percent, the company said.

Other multinational medical companies are also stepping up localization in China. GE Healthcare, for example, displayed 23 medical technology products at the China International Medical Equipment Fair held in Shanghai earlier this month, of which 18 are developed and made in China, according to media reports.

Half of the output of Shenzhen's medical equipment industry is targeting overseas markets, mainly developed markets like the United States and Europe, said Cai Qiaowu, secretary-general of the Shenzhen Medical Device Association.

The strong technological strength of Siemens Healthineers and its solid record in implementing international regulations and standards will help Shenzhen's industry players better tap into the international markets, he said.

Briefly

Hainan FTP boosts educational opening-up

Hainan province is constructing an education innovation zone at the Hainan Free Trade Port to boost its educational opening-up. The Li'an International Education Innovation Pilot Zone will be the FTP's sole education pilot zone, and its core mission is to enhance the opening-up of Hainan's education sector to the outside world. The zone's Lingshui Comprehensive Sports Center, located in Lingshui Li autonomous county and built by China Railway No 4 Engineering Group Co Ltd, was also topped-out recently, completing a key landmark for the Hainan FTP and aiding Hainan's ability to host international sporting events.

Banks' bad loan ratio falls in Q1

The nonperforming loan ratio of China's commercial banks fell to 1.62 percent by the end of the first quarter, with the quality of their credit assets generally stable, official data showed. The ratio edged down 0.01 percentage point from the end of 2022, according to the National Administration of Financial Regulation. By the end of March, these banks had outstanding bad loans of 3.1 trillion yuan ($440.62 billion), up 134.1 billion yuan from the end of last year.

Huawei completes ERP switch in 15 hours

Huawei Technologies Co has replaced the legacy enterprise resource planning system with a self-developed one, MetaERP system, at 88 overseas subsidiaries in just 15 hours, highlighting its technological strength and marking yet another victory for the company amid prolonged restrictions by the United States government. ERP represents key software underpinning a company's business operations, ranging from accounting to supply chain management.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS

Swarovski charts plan for sparkling growth

CEO vows more store openings in Chinese cities to tap burgeoning Gen Z demand

By SHI JING
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Austrian jewelry and accessories brand Swarovski will achieve a record rate of store openings in China this year, the company's CEO Alexis Nasard said in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

Nasard said this during a visit to China in mid-May — his first to the country since it optimized its COVID-19 control measures.

The new Swarovski stores will be located in both first-tier cities and smaller ones. Meanwhile, the company will have refurbished 70 percent of its existing stores in China by the end of this year, said Nasard.

Apart from better brand building, the company's stress on physical stores can be attributed to data that 75 percent of its sales revenue is generated by offline channels, while the rest is from online retailing, Nasard said.

Swarovski saw double-digit growth in its China stores in April. Consumers are returning to the stores, doing "a lot of revenge spending". As a result, the company's combined online and offline sales in China are back to their pre-pandemic levels.

This is in line with market consultancy Bain & Co's prediction in February, which said that China's luxury market will recover before the first quarter wraps up.

"The recovery in people's consumption appetite is putting China slowly on track to become Swarovski's No 1 market," Nasard said.

While the United States is still the top moneymaker for Swarovski, which is expected to account for 12 percent of the company's annual revenue this year, China, its second-largest market, is not too far behind, expecting to contribute 11 percent to Swarovski's annual turnover.

> "The recovery in people's consumption appetite is putting China slowly on track to become Swarovski's No 1 market."
>
> **Alexis Nasard,** CEO of Austrian jewelry and accessories brand Swarovski

According to Nasard, the spike in personal savings in China during the pandemic period can be translated into much growth potential for Swarovski.

According to the People's Bank of China, the central bank, household deposits in China increased by 17.84 trillion yuan ($2.55 trillion) in 2022, up more than 80 percent year-on-year. Household savings continued to increase by 9.9 trillion yuan in the first quarter of this year.

However, a turning point was seen in April, as household savings decreased by 1.2 trillion yuan — the first decline in 13 months.

Although cyclical factors and lowering interest rates also exerted some impact, the contraction in household savings has reflected people's rising risk appetite and consumption willingness, said Ming Ming, chief economist of CITIC Securities.

The National Bureau of Statistics said on Tuesday that China's total retail sales of consumer goods exceeded 3.49 trillion yuan in April, up 18.4 percent year-on-year and reported the growth rate rose by 7.8 percentage points than that in March.

People's interest in luxury products is recovering, as 52 percent of Chinese mainland consumers will increase their luxury expenditure this year, which is higher than the 2020 level of 44 percent, according to a report jointly released by media group Ruder Finn and research firm CSG Intage in March.

Generation Z — those born between 1995 and 2009 — should not be overlooked as they will soon become the largest luxury consumer group, according to experts of professional services provider KPMG.

The same trend has been noticed by Swarovski, as Gen Z and millennials now represent two-thirds of the company's consumers, said Nasard.

The sophistication of Chinese consumers and the expansion of the middle-income group have pointed to much growth potential in China, he added.

In light of the multiple growth engines in China, Swarovski will launch three China-specific capsule collections in the second half of this year. The company will launch a global photography-themed brand campaign this year — with one in China in early June — and a cultural event in Shanghai by the year-end, said Nasard.

AD

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Asianet

An employee of Alps Alpine, a Japanese electromechanical components maker, works at the company's facility in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, in July. LI BO / XINHUA

Wuxi delegation's 3-nation tour leads to blossoming of economic, trade ties

By CANG WEI in Nanjing
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A high-level delegation from Wuxi led by its mayor Zhao Jianjun visited Singapore, the Republic of Korea and Japan from May 4 to May 12 to strengthen economic, trade and cultural ties, and signed 79 cooperation projects amounting to a total contract value of $12.2 billion with the top companies of these countries, according to the Wuxi municipal government.

Wuxi, in Jiangsu province, has topped Chinese cities in per capita GDP in 2020, 2021 and 2022, and has established a market-oriented, rule-based and globalized environment to bolster its economy and trade, it said. The city has attracted more than 7,200 foreign-funded companies, and its use of foreign capital has surpassed $80 billion.

Last year, foreign-funded companies contributed to 30 percent of the city's industrial output and tax revenue, according to the statement.

"We will take this exchange as an opportunity to further expand high-level opening-up and provide better services, preferential policies and a comfortable environment," Zhao said in a statement.

In Singapore, the delegation held an international cooperation and exchange conference and communicated with leading enterprises and universities to deepen understanding and cooperation between Wuxi and the city-state.

Wuxi and Singapore's Sembcorp Group agreed to build the Wuxi Singapore Science and Technology Innovation City to introduce advanced technologies and leading enterprises to the city from the Belt and Road Initiative markets and member nations of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Singapore has stood out as a friendly, trustworthy and reliable partner in Wuxi's history of international exchanges, according to the municipal government. Wuxi's trade value with Singapore touched $4.12 billion last year, an increase of 11.1 percent year-on-year.

Singapore has invested in more than 700 enterprises in Wuxi with a cumulative capital of $16.4 billion as of December, while Wuxi's enterprises have invested in 61 projects in Singapore with an agreed investment amount of $1.06 billion as of February, the municipal government said.

According to Hu Zhuojun, executive director of Singapore's THI Industrial Investment Group, Jiangsu is an attraction for investors as it is one of the most economically developed regions in China, and has a strong industrial foundation.

"We will build an industrial park with Singapore characteristics in Wuxi, based on the previous investment experience of Singapore by introducing enterprises from the marine and shipbuilding industry," he was quoted as saying by the Jiangsu Broadcasting Corp.

Kim Doo-gyeom, mayor of Ulsan, South Korea, said the city's plan was to continuously deepen cooperation between the two cities in areas such as artificial intelligence, new energy and the biological industry.

The Republic of Korea and Japan are important trading partners of Wuxi, especially in the fields of integrated circuits, new energy, bio-pharmaceuticals and automotive industries.

By the end of last year, ROK had invested in 742 companies in Wuxi, with a cumulative amount of $25.84 billion, accounting for nearly one-third of Jiangsu's use of capital from the country.

Last year, Japan became Wuxi's second-largest trade partner with a trade value of $10.68 billion. As of the end of 2022, Japan had invested $16.65 billion in 1,278 companies in the city.

"The rapid development of Wuxi's integrated circuit industry and its attraction of South Korean capital have proved the strong manufacturing industry and support capabilities of the city," said Chen Ping, director of the Wuxi Investment Promotion Center.

The city now has 36 of the 41 major industrial categories in the country, Chen said.

To deepen cooperation, the Wuxi delegation unveiled multiple service platforms, including the Wuxi (Seoul) Business Innovation Exchange Center, Wuxi (Tokyo) Business Innovation Exchange Center and Wuxi Cultural Tourism (Tokyo) Promotion Center.

Wuxi said it would construct five to eight new high-quality international communities and more than three international medical institutions over the next three years in order to provide a better environment for global investors to start businesses in the city.

Xiling gold mine shines brighter with discovery of 200-ton reserve

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
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The total gold reserve of Xiling gold mine in East China's Shandong province has risen to 580 metric tons after the recent discovery of nearly 200 tons of reserves in the mine, according to the Shandong Provincial Department of Natural Resources.

The discovery makes Xiling the largest single gold reserve mine in China, the department said last week.

Shandong Gold Group Co, the owner of Xiling gold mine, announced in 2017 that the company detected 382.58 tons of gold reserve in the Xiling mine.

Based on the price of gold in the Chinese market on Thursday, the gold reserve in Xiling mine represents a potential value of more than 200 billion yuan ($28.5 billion).

Xiling gold mine is located in the region between Laizhou and Zhaoyuan, the two coastal county-level cities of Yantai in Shandong province. The region is one of the largest gold production areas in China, with the gold reserves and output ranking first in the country, according to the China Gold Association (CGA).

North of the Xiling mine is the Sanshandao island area where a huge gold orebody was identified in 2016. The Sanshandao gold ore field is the first marine gold field discovered in China with a gold reserve of 470 tons.

> "Gold reserve in the mine is mainly distributed at a depth of 1,000 meters to 2,500 meters, making Xiling the deepest gold mine discovered in China."
>
> **Feng Tao,** vice-general manager of Shandong Gold Geological and Mineral Exploration Co Ltd

"Xiling gold mine is a representative of deep prospecting projects. Gold reserve in the mine is mainly distributed at a depth of 1,000 meters to 2,500 meters, making Xiling the deepest gold mine discovered in China," said Feng Tao, vice-general manager of Shandong Gold Geological and Mineral Exploration Co Ltd.

Explorers drilled 180 boreholes into the mine with a total length of over 300,000 meters, among which the deepest reached 4,006 meters down into the ground.

The gold orebody at Xiling mine extends more than 2,050 meters and part of it has a thickness of 62.35 meters. The gold reserve has been detected to have an average gold grade of 4.26 grams per ton, Feng said.

"Xiling gold mine is expected to maintain production that has a daily process capacity of 10,000 tons of ore working for more than 30 years," he said.

Both gold consumption and investment demand for gold in the domestic market saw an increase during the first quarter. Gold consumption volume reached 291.58 tons in the first quarter, a 12.03 percent year-on-year growth, according to the CGA.

Sales of gold jewelry reached 189.61 tons in the first quarter, a year-on-year increase of 12.29 percent, while gold bars and coin sales totaled 83.87 tons, up 20.47 percent year-on-year.

Data from the People's Bank of China show that China has increased its gold reserves for six consecutive months, with the central bank's gold reserves reaching 66.76 million ounces by the end of April, an increase of 260,000 ounces compared to the end of March.

BUSINESSFOCUS

African entrepreneurs partner with China for success, growth

Access to large market, technical know-how boon for budding businesses

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG** in Beijing and **ZHU YOUFANG** in Changsha

Silas Musyoka, based in his home country of Kenya, has worked as a sales growth manager at Chinese e-commerce firm Kilimall for five years.

"I'm still learning about the ever-growing e-commerce sector in this country. I believe that Kilimall will have a big impact shaping many economies in Africa," said Musyoka, 32, who obtained his master's degree in political science from Jinan University in Guangzhou.

Kilimall is Kenya's leading online shopping mall. It was set up in 2014 with the motto of "Enriching Lives for Africa", and has more than 10 million registered users.

The company is among other e-commerce firms banking on the promising trade opportunities between China and African countries.

Musyoka said Kilimall has helped him better understand the market and supply chain dynamics in his home country and what it takes to succeed in the tech industry, which is still in its infancy in Kenya. He said he has witnessed how e-commerce has shaped local businesses.

"In this regard, I have been an influencer to most of my peers who are looking to start, establish and grow their businesses in Kenya. I am in a position to coach and guide them in their businesses thanks to the knowledge that I have gained while working at Kilimall," he said.

Musyoka first visited China as a businessman and later as a student, juggling school and work.

"Life in China is fast-paced, where you have to adjust really fast to changing situations. More than what is taught in class, your experiences in the markets, factories, historical and tourist sites and interactions with people also contribute just as much to the learning experiences," he said.

Musyoka said China has a lot to offer in terms of knowledge, skills and technology.

"We still have a long way to go to gain the skills and the knowledge required to build stable e-commerce platforms in this region," he said. Musyoka said Kilimall has been helpful in both those areas. "We have a taste of what China-Africa partnership has to offer."

He said China is a good partner for Africa in terms of filling in the gaps in the supply chain and the technology that is necessary to help small businesses grow in Kenya.

"Having built e-commerce giants, China has the knowledge to help us have the same experience here in Africa," Musyoka said.

Top: Entrepreneurs exchange opinions on cross-border e-commerce at the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone in September 2022. DONG JIANGHUI / XINHUA
Above: A teacher instructs an international student from Africa in e-commerce-related skills in Chongqing in May 2020. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Having built e-commerce giants, China has the knowledge to help us have the same experience here in Africa."
>
> **Silas Musyoka,** sales growth manager at Chinese e-commerce firm Kilimall

Kilimall, which considers itself a Kenyan company, was founded by Yang Tao, a former marketing executive for a leading Chinese tech firm's branch in Kenya.

The company has now developed its marketing, payment, distribution centers and customer services in Kenya, with operational and technology teams based in Changsha, capital of Hunan province.

"We hope to be viewed as Africa's answer to Taobao or JD.com," said Guan Jian, vice-president of Kilimall. "The profound knowledge from our executive teams, made up of veteran Chinese professionals stationed in Africa, has empowered our firm to understand the nuances in both Africa and China, to match resources from the two sides."

Kilimall doubled its revenue last year and has become one of the top three most downloaded e-commerce mobile applications in Kenya, Guan said.

The company is looking to boost bilateral trade between China and African countries, especially through exporting more African goods, such as coffee, nuts, red wine and aloe, to China to meet the demand for higher-quality consumer goods, he said.

In the first half of last year, revenue from trade between China and Africa reached $137.4 billion, up 16.6 percent year-on-year, according to the website of China's Ministry of Commerce. Imports from Africa to China were $60.6 billion, an increase of 19.1 percent year-on-year. Exports from China to African countries were $76.8 billion, growing 14.7 percent year-on-year.

Kilimall's presence in Kenya has helped expand trade. The company's local employees and distribution networks in Kenya add value to sourcing quality products in Africa, Guan said.

"It still takes time and effort for Chinese consumers to become more aware of the value of African products," he added.

African entrepreneurs have been enthusiastic about shipping more goods to China.

Njagi Kevin Murimi, 30, who started Changsha Connect Trade Co Ltd four years ago, said he came to China first for the sheer size of the market.

Murimi said Kenya's population is about the same as Hunan's. "China has offered a huge market for me," he said.

After studying and working in Changsha for years, Murimi combined what he had learned there with China's advanced technology and policies, the value of its currency and the availability of products in China.

Last year, the trade volume of Murimi's firm was around 400,000 yuan ($56,903). His company exports mostly nail polish, wigs and electronics to Africa. He exports nail polish, his bestseller, to Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda.

Murimi's family business in Kenya, operating coffee processing plants, has exported coffee to the United States for over 10 years. He said he plans to accelerate the company's business development in China, where the coffee sector still has great potential.

The company has been in contact with retail coffee chains and other Chinese retail stores, such as supermarkets, and it also expects to sell online.

"Starting this year, we are working on more products for export and import, including products like avocados," he said. "Kenya has become one of the countries in Africa that has been authorized to work with the Chinese government to export fresh avocados to China," he said.

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Rise in online trade with Africa benefits consumers

By **FAN FEIFEI**
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Ethiopian coffee, Kenyan black tea, Tanzanian cashew nuts, chili sauce from Rwanda and chocolate from Ghana — these are among the affordable products from Africa offered to Chinese consumers, who are embracing cross-border online shopping for high-quality, imported and foreign-brand items.

Chinese online retailers are ramping up efforts to expand their footprint in African nations, helping local farmers sell their specialties by leveraging new technologies such as livestreaming and providing related cross-border e-commerce training courses. It's part of a broader push to bolster Sino-African economic and trade cooperation.

In February, the Rwanda Development Board and Alibaba.com, Chinese tech heavyweight Alibaba Group's business-to-business platform, signed a new e-commerce agreement, saying that an initial group of 20 Rwandan small and medium-sized enterprises will sell their products through Alibaba.com as a way to start their digitalized operations.

Alibaba.com will provide comprehensive e-commerce operational guidance and a full range of support services for the Rwandan SMEs, such as web design, training and counseling, to help them establish online stores, select suitable products and optimize store operations, the company said.

"This partnership will not only help Rwandan enterprises improve the sales and exports of their products, but also facilitate their digital transformation," said Zhang Entao, deputy general manager of the global supplier development department at Alibaba.com.

In 2018, Rwanda agreed to work with Alibaba through the electronic World Trade Platform initiative to export local specialties. The concept of eWTP was proposed by Alibaba founder Jack Ma to connect worldwide SMEs through e-commerce, technology and streamlined administrative procedures. Rwanda is the first African nation to sign an eWTP deal with Alibaba.

Rwanda's spicy chili sauce has been listed on Alibaba's fresh food chain Freshippo. Rwandan coffee has also landed on Tmall Global, Alibaba's cross-border e-commerce site.

"E-commerce has brought more and more African goods to Chinese families," said James Kimonyo, Rwandan ambassador to China.

There are many local specialties in Rwanda, such as avocado oil, that will be popular with Chinese consumers, he said. Kimonyo has taken part in quite a few livestreaming sessions to promote his nation's products to Chinese consumers.

In order to satisfy Chinese consumers' rising demand for high-quality products made in Africa, JD Super, the online supermarket arm of Chinese e-commerce platform JD.com, has opened online national pavilions covering a wide range of commodities from Tanzania and South Africa.

Currently, JD Super has introduced nearly 200 specialties from African countries, such as South African wine, abalone and rooibos tea, an infusion made from a native herb. Nuts, fresh oysters and frozen seafood from South Africa are also expected to be available in China in the near future, the company said.

China's cross-border e-commerce sector has been growing exponentially over the past few years as the country's middle- and high-income shoppers demand increasingly diversified and personalized products and services, experts said.

The nation's cross-border e-commerce reached 2.11 trillion yuan ($300.2 billion) in 2022, a year-on-year increase of 9.8 percent, according to the General Administration of Customs.

Unlike Europe and the United States, where the reach for online shopping is relatively high, Africa has enormous growth potential in the cross-border e-commerce sector, said Zhang Zhouping, a senior analyst of business-to-business and cross-border activities at the Internet Economy Institute, a domestic consultancy.

"As a new form of foreign trade, cross-border e-commerce has witnessed rapid growth during the COVID-19 pandemic and become a new engine of the country's foreign trade development," Zhang said. He emphasized that digital trade is expected to play a bigger role in promoting economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa, and empower the development of the real economy.

According to a report from the JD Consumption and Industry Development Research Institute, Chinese consumers are increasingly demanding diversified and high-end consumer goods, with their expenditure on imported products being a significant driver in that area. JD has procured more than 500 billion yuan in imported products over the past three years, the company said.

"Chinese e-commerce platforms are accelerating their presence in overseas markets to seek new sources of revenue, as growth in the domestic e-commerce sector is slowing," said Chen Tao, a Beijing-based analyst at internet consultancy Analysys. He said Chinese enterprises should step up localization efforts in overseas markets and comply with local laws and regulations to ensure they become reputed brands overseas.

Zhang Tianbing, head of Deloitte Asia-Pacific consumer products and retail industry, said, "With the expansion of domestic demand and advances in emerging retail technologies, China has introduced preferential policies, such as lowering import taxes and expanding the range of goods allowed to be imported."

The boom in celebrity livestreaming has also spurred cross-border e-commerce purchases by domestic consumers, Zhang said, adding that overseas brands are moving to cross-border platforms as they expand their distribution channels in light of COVID-19 disruptions to offline retail.

Top: Farmers pick tea leaves at a tea plantation in Kericho, Kenya, in August 2021. BILLY MUTAI / GETTY IMAGES
Above: Visitors gather at the booth of Alibaba.com during a cross-border e-commerce expo in Fuzhou, Fujian province, in March. LYU MING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

LIFE

Festival helps village tune into wider audience

Guangxi ethnic performers and ASEAN bloc musicians exchange musical culture, establishing bonds, report **Xing Wen** and **Shi Ruipeng** in Nanning.

A music festival, held from May 13 to 14, gathers bands hailing from Chinese ethnic groups and musicians from ASEAN countries, including Indonesian Jenny Besin and her band (top left) and the Mumian ensemble (above right), adding a cultural allure to Guyuepo village in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Under the soft patter of a light drizzle, bands hailing from Chinese ethnic groups, such as the Lahu and Zhuang, along with musicians from across the ASEAN bloc, serenaded audiences with mesmerizing melodies produced by traditional instruments, while bustling food stalls served up an array of delectable cuisines.

This hometown-themed music festival was held in Guyuepo village, Nanyang town of Nanning, capital of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, from May 13 to 14.

The opening band was the Mumian ensemble (*mumian* meaning kapok), formed in 2012 and consisting of five Zhuang musicians.

The band has made a name for itself through participation in cultural events promoting Zhuang traditional culture.

In 2015, they released their debut album and embarked on their first concert tour within Guangxi. Their original compositions feature a distinctive musical style revolving around blending traditional Zhuang folk songs with modern pop elements.

They skillfully incorporate a mix of instruments, harmonies and vocal styles, presenting a fresh interpretation of Zhuang music and allowing more people to appreciate its unique charm.

"We are delighted to participate in this international music festival, which has provided us with the chance to connect with foreign bands from such countries as Indonesia and Malaysia," says Lu Jianping, founder of the group.

He says that through this exchange of music and culture, participants have deepened their mutual understanding and made significant advances through shared learning.

"We will continue to uncover the cultural essence of ethnic music in Guangxi and create more distinctive musical works that represent the Zhuang ethnic group," says Lu.

"Through music, we aim to foster a greater understanding of Guangxi among audiences."

Jenny Besin, a member of an Indonesian pop band at the festival, was also enthusiastic.

"Participating in music activities in China has been a great honor and an amazing experience for me," says the Indonesian musician.

Being able to share Indonesian music with the audiences has made her proud, she adds. "The people I met here were kind and welcoming, open to learning about our culture. When I saw their appreciation, it made me feel more at home."

After seeing the other performances at the festival, she says that she has found the folk music scene in China to be "unique, memorable and amazing", and also believes it has the power to unite people.

The local government aims to create biannual rural music gatherings, centered around the key agricultural seasons of "spring sowing" and "autumn harvest".

These events will serve as platforms for facilitating artistic exchanges between China and ASEAN countries, while promoting the development and flourishing of indigenous music culture.

As a rural vitalizing endeavor, the music gatherings also aim to elevate the cultural appeal of Guyuepo village and the greater Nanyang town area.

Chen Chaofeng, Party secretary of Nanyang, says that the town plans to drive rural vitalization through developing its cultural industry.

"Building upon the success of the spring and autumn music festivals, our goal is to expand the frequency of similar events, aiming for quarterly or monthly performances," Chen says.

Efforts will be made to attract more musicians to establish studios in Nanyang and explore the production of ethnic musical instruments there.

"We hope to explore the aesthetics of traditional music in a modern context," Chen adds.

During the festival, music and cultural exchange centers co-established in Guoyuepo village by the local government and foreign institutions from countries including Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines also conducted opening ceremonies, showcasing their commitment to fostering cross-cultural connections and long-term friendship.

Contact the writers at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Book restorers keep ancient treasures alive

By WANG KAIHAO
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The restoration of a precious copy of the *Yongle Dadian* ("Yongle encyclopedia") is being celebrated through a special exhibition at the National Library of China in Beijing.

First compiled in the early 15th century during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) following an edict by the Emperor Yongle, this set of handwritten texts is often considered the largest paper-based encyclopedia ever written. It included an estimated 370 million Chinese characters, and consisted of 22,937 volumes in 11,095 copies.

The original edition went missing in history, though a 16th-century duplicate survived into the 19th century, mostly intact. Many more volumes were subsequently destroyed or got lost in upheaval. Today, only about 400 survive, and every one is considered a literary treasure.

When a volume on the Chinese character *hu* (lake) returned from Canada to be housed at the National Library of China in 2013, it was welcomed by excited librarians, who had been waiting to restore its aged pages.

In 2021, the national library, the China Foundation for Cultural Heritage Conservation and ByteDance, the parent company of short-video platform TikTok, or Douyin in China, jointly established a fund to restore the document.

About 10 million yuan ($1.43 million) was spent, not only on the restoration of the text, but also on training restorers, digitalizing the work and embracing associated public education programs.

The fund has also sponsored the restoration of 104 other ancient books from 10 libraries nationwide.

The fruits of this project were apparent at the exhibition, in which 39 recently restored ancient books were on display. The exhibition, launched in the national library last week, will last for two months.

"This project explores a path for how public institutions and other sectors of society can closely cooperate on the preservation of cultural relics," says Xiong Yuanming, director of the national library.

Xiong says that many new methods were utilized in the restoration of the *Yongle Dadian* volume. In previous restorations of other volumes, silk pieces available on the market that were similar to those in the original version were used. But for this project, restorers conducted a detailed materials analysis and were able to weave textiles specially tailored to resemble those used in the past.

Other exhibited books are also milestones in Chinese literary history. For example, the Shanghai Library presented an 1848 print edition of *Yinghuan Zhilue* ("brief record of the globe"). Written by Xu Jishe, an official in coastal Fujian province who was in contact with foreign missionaries, merchants and diplomats, the monumental work revolutionized understanding of world geography among Chinese literati and offered key inspiration for Japan's modernization drive.

Chen Chao, director of the Shanghai Library, says: "We chose this book to join the project not only because of its importance, but also because the copy had various kinds of 'diseases' — it was damaged by water and bugs and its color was fading.

"It thus offered a perfect case for restorers to try for a comprehensive cure, combining traditional craftsmanship and new technology. Conservation of relics needs to catch up with the times."

Other exhibits include ancient maps of the Yellow River, ink-rubbed bronzewares, and a Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) book written in Tangut script, an extinct language spoken by the Tangut people who once lived in northwestern China.

Several ancient paper-made models of imperial architecture, known as *tangyang*, are also showcased in the exhibition. According to Chen Hongyan, head of the ancient book department of the national library, these special documents — stereoscopic building blueprints — can offer crucial references for restoration of historical architecture.

Since 2021, 107 restorers of ancient works have attended training sessions within the framework of the joint fund. *Ancient Books Traveling Through Time and Space*, a documentary featuring these specialists, went online last year, and attracted 34 million views within its first month of release.

"Ancient books are part of the long lineage of Chinese culture and history and demonstrate the vitality of Chinese civilization," says Liu Yuzhu, head of the China Foundation for Cultural Heritage Conservation. "Our efforts show that ancient books can still garner enthusiastic feedback from the public today. More creative ways are needed in the future to further protect and bring them alive."

Above: One of the restored volumes of *Yongle Dadian*. **Left:** A visitor interacts with a virtual reality game about ancient book restoration at the National Library of China in Beijing. PHOTOS BY WANG KAIHAO / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

From left: A map of the Ancient Tea Horse Road in Nakeli, a key stop in Pu'er, Yunnan province. Su Guowen, leader of the Blang ethnic group in Pu'er, examines the tea leaves at his tea plantation. Nakeli used to be a stop that provided accommodation and horses for caravans and is now a tourist destination. PHOTOS BY ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

A thirst for tea culture

After China gave up its secrets on making silk, an ancient trade route was put to many other lucrative uses, report **Deng Zhangyu** and **Li Yingqing** in Kunming.

On a summer's day in 1990, Chen Baoya and five friends embarked on a three-month hiking trip with horses, dogs and tents in which they would explore ancient roads between Yunnan province and the Tibet autonomous region.

The roads they used had formed a network linking China with the rest of the world for more than 1,000 years.

"Our plan was to do research on linguistics and culture along the ancient route," says Chen, who with a few of the other team members were teachers at Yunnan University in Kunming, the provincial capital.

"One thing we discovered was that tea had been an important commodity along the route we trekked," says Chen, now a professor of linguistics at Peking University.

Thus it was how the trekkers coined the term *chama gudao*, or the Ancient Tea Horse Road, to describe the route they had covered.

They set off from Zhongdian, or Shangri-La, in Yunnan in June, traveling over snowcapped mountains, valleys and grasslands at extremely high altitudes, reaching Chamdo in Tibet and Kangding in Sichuan province, before making the return trip and being back in Shangri-La in September.

During the trek, they met tea porters who worked for horse caravans. The scholars were told that these tea porters had traveled to India with horse and mule caravans along the ancient route.

In a published research paper on the trek, they used the name the Ancient Tea Horse Road, and it attracted a great deal of attention, helping generate further research in China and elsewhere.

The name was based on the common trade of tea for horses a millennium earlier, when Chinese needed the animals as they fought to ward off enemies in the north.

The network of roads became to be increasingly used in the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties and stretching through to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

"The route had once been called the South Silk Road," Chen says. "But silk was not a necessity for most people, and the Silk Road linking China with the rest of the world was little used."

Nevertheless, before the roads became conduits for tea, silk was the predominant, lucrative commodity carried along them, its destination being wealthy people in the West.

However, as the know-how of raising silkworms and making silk became implanted in many countries, they stopped buying it from China, meaning many of the Silk Road's arteries fell into disuse.

"Only when the drinking of tea thrived during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) was the old trail reactivated and became a major commercial route between the East and the West," says Chen, 67, who since the 1990 journey has never let up on his research.

He describes the route as a "life road" because the Tibetans living at high altitudes acquired a taste for tea in the Tang Dynasty, and it became a staple of their daily life.

However, because those mountainous areas are not conducive to tea growing, the long-distance tea trade began from Yunnan where tea trees were largely cultivated.

Tea produced in Yunnan was carried on the backs of horses, mules and even yaks into high-altitude areas, and to the south, including to what is now India, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. It was also taken to the north, through the Xinjiang Uygur or Inner Mongolia autonomous region, to Russia.

"Russia is very cold and high-altitude," Chen says.

"Tea grown in China was largely transported to Russia using the ancient route."

Tea trees require a certain altitude, sunshine, humidity and particular soil types to grow, and those requirements kept the ancient road humming with trade for centuries.

Su Guowen, 80, a Blang ethnic group leader in Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er, the main tea producing area in Yunnan, says that when he was a boy, he had to walk a long way to a tea trading market to sell tea with his family, from which horse caravans would take the commodity to South Asian countries.

"My father told me that there was an old tea trail more than 800 years old not far away from my village," says Su, whose family has cultivated tea trees for 1,800 years according to the ethnic group's records.

On the trail, horse hooves left deep indentations, round and deep in either the stone stairs or cobbled lanes. Marks of horseshoe prints and burned stones nearby are important tokens for Chen in identifying an ancient tea route.

"The caravans took little food with them. They cooked food during the commercial journey, and those burned stones are firm evidence of this."

The trek was not just arduous but perilous, many tea porters never making the return journey.

Chen says that on his trek, his team encountered large wild animals, endured extreme weather, managed to avoid mud slides and struggled with the physical stresses of traveling at high altitude.

"When we got back to Shangri-La, many people were amazed that all six of us had returned in one piece," Chen says.

Almost every year since that arduous trek, Chen has covered the same route, but in the relative luxury of a car. He has also visited Japan, Malaysia and South Korea doing research related to the tea route.

"Japanese people treat tea as an elegant lifestyle, while Tibetans in China treat it as a daily necessity," says Chen, who spent a year in Japan as a visiting scholar in 2006.

In terms of linguistics, he says the word for tea in most places around the world derives from the Chinese *cha*.

"It's just one more piece of evidence of how tea culture spread along the Ancient Tea Horse Road from China."

Following tea culture, art produced by Buddhism, commodities including jewelry, jade, fragrance and ceramics have been exchanged along the most actively used international commercial route linking the East and the West.

In addition to that route, tea produced in China was eventually being exported from Zhejiang and Fujian provinces to Europe by sea.

"Both the ancient road and maritime routes helped transport Chinese tea and culture to the world," Chen says.

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Above: Farmers working in Erlong Mountain, in Pu'er, where a large volume of China's tea is produced. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY
Below: Chen Baoya, one of the scholars who coined the phrase Ancient Tea Horse Road in 1990, with local children on his trek to the tea road. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Perfect taste of tradition, brewed in a stream

By **DENG ZHANGYU** and **LI YINGQING**

In a forest on Jingmai Mountain in Lancang county, Yunnan province, Xian Jin, 22, tasted tea under a tea tree more than 100 years old in late March, the ripest of times for picking tea.

In front of her was a smartphone through whose screen viewers were deluging her with questions about the taste of the tea and the local tea culture.

Xian interacts with the viewers through a livestreaming platform that demonstrates how tea picking is done, and now and again they enjoy a bonus: Xian singing and dancing to the melody of local music. In March and April it is common for her to work until about 10 pm as villagers process freshly picked leaves.

Xian is a member of the Dai ethnic group in the village of Nuogang on Jingmai Mountain, where one of the world's oldest and largest cultivated tea forests is located. For more than 1,000 years the village has lived off the ancient tea plantations.

"When I was 3, my mother carried me with a basket on the back to the tea plantation, and I helped her pick tea leaves," Xian says.

Making and drinking tea is integral to the lives of all villagers, young and old, she says.

However, what makes Xian stand out is that she is the first of the Dai villagers to sell tea online and to promote the local tea culture through that channel, mainly by way of Douyin, a popular video-sharing platform.

She often starts streaming at 3 pm or 4 pm, she says, continuing until late into the night at the busiest times of the year, in spring and autumn when tea is harvested and processed.

At other times Xian presents to viewers the picturesque landscape of the village and its surrounds and gives them insights into the villagers and their culture. Some of her viewers come from across the globe, including Italy and nations of Southeast Asia.

The very rudimentary transport routes giving access from the outside world to Jingmai Mountain, and vice versa, mean that few of those who live there ever venture beyond its confines. Indeed Xian is one of the few young people in the village who has stepped foot in big cities, including Kunming, capital of Yunnan, and Shenzhen, Guangdong province, where Xian learned a lot of what she knows about Chinese tea culture, the art of tea making and tea tasting.

Last year when she began livestreaming with her boyfriend Ding Zhixiong, 28, they spent a day, smartphone in hand, touring the village and the tea plantations to give internet audiences a glimpse of villagers producing tea.

"Villagers didn't get what we were up to," Xian says. "I guess they thought we were just idling about."

When they cottoned on to what Xian and his boyfriend were doing, they gave the couple's online venture a giant thumbs-up, aware that the area's tea traditions were being made known to a wide audience. Once the venture became well known to young people who had left the village to study or to make the most of better work opportunities, many returned to the village and began setting up their own livestreaming channels.

Ai Sailuan, leader of the Dai ethnic group in the area, says Xian has set a good example on spreading tea culture and has thus given a fillip to the tea industry there. Previously tea sales had been restricted to people visiting the area, he says.

"Older people like me have little idea of the internet and social media. Young people like Xian are helping us make our tea available to a much larger group of buyers. That also means that many young people are opting to live in the village rather than moving to cities to make a living."

Xian stresses that her business was by no means an instant success. When what she showed online was almost exclusively related to tea, she had fewer than 100 viewers for a time, but several months after she began diversifying what she was presenting, such as showing scenic tea plantations and the attractive ancient village, the number of viewers shot up into the tens of thousands, she says.

"I was proud and excited to see that so many people from across the world love our tea and village."

Xian demonstrates all aspects of tea production, such as climbing onto tea trees to pick leaves and tossing and drying leaves in pots. The colorful traditional Dai clothing and accessories she wears add to the spectacle.

"Audiences are often keen to know about what I'm wearing, and that gives me an opportunity to talk about our culture," Xian says.

Ding says that livestreaming in the tea tree forest at night presents some risks.

"We come across various types of snakes, and Xian once stumbled on a poisonous one."

Xian says the livestreaming is bringing in about 8,000 yuan ($1,160) in tea sales a day. Ai, the village leader, says the average yearly income of a villager is less than 20,000 yuan.

Xian Jin and her boyfriend Ding Zhixiong utilize the internet and social media to promote the tea and ethnic culture of their hometown in Lancang county, Yunnan province. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

Sound of the past, note for the future

Traditional bamboo flute attracts new admirers with its melodious tone, **Wang Ru** reports.

Often accompanying the *guqin*, a zither-like seven-stringed traditional musical instrument, the *xiao*, a traditional vertical bamboo flute with a relatively light sound, was often viewed as a foil. But with its long history and rich cultural connotations, the once-ignored instrument is now attracting more and more attention.

Shen Yingbiao is a *xiao* player. Although he had strong interests in musical instruments from childhood, and learned the harmonica, the *erhu* (two-stringed bowed instrument) and guitar when he was young, it is the *xiao* that has been an inseparable part of his life for decades.

Shen was infatuated with the instrument after he bought a tape of *xiao* music and listened to the soft, graceful and mellow sound in his hometown of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in 1988.

He threw himself into the world of the *xiao*. He spent almost a decade learning to play the instrument and polish his skills, another decade imparting them to others, and now the 53-year-old is still working to promote the instrument and its culture.

Not long after Shen was first attracted to the instrument, he decided to learn it. In the 1990s, when internet usage was not widespread in China, learning a less popular instrument was not an easy task, not least because of the scarcity of nearby teachers.

Besides teaching himself and listening to tapes to compare and improve, Shen embarked on trips to visit those who gave compelling performances he heard on tape, and received tutoring from masters in this area, such as Song Jinglian, Luo Shoucheng and Chen Hangming.

Since he had to study at school and then work to support himself, he could only undertake such trips in his spare time. As a result, the learning process spanned his 20s. “It was very tiring. Without high-speed trains, common today, I had to take a train for more than 20 hours to Beijing, or other places, to visit people. But I was resolute to take this road. I wanted to improve my skills and learn more,” says Shen.

While learning the instrument, Shen was increasingly fascinated by the rich cultural connotations contained in the *xiao*. According to him, a scene from a TV series of a literate person piping the *xiao* in the moonlight, an image full of elegance and poetry, evoked his romantic imagination and has been engraved in his heart since childhood. And that reflects the close relationship between this instrument and the literate in times gone by.

In ancient China, bamboo symbolized integrity, modesty and a spirit of striving to make progress. As a result, many liked the plant and used it to refer to their pursuits in poems. For example, Song Dynasty (960-1279) poet Su Shi once wrote, “Better to eat without meat than live without bamboo”, suggesting the importance of bamboo in their hearts.

Clockwise from top: *Xiao* musician Shen Yingbiao (right) plays the traditional Chinese musical instrument with another performer playing *guqin* at a concert in Shanghai last year; Shen (right) judges a woman's *xiao* skills during a grading test in Taizhou, Zhejiang province, last year; he introduces the *xiao* to an attentive audience in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, in January. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Therefore, the *xiao*, made of bamboo, was much more than an instrument, but something they often held in hands or put on walls to remind themselves of their pursuits, and they sometimes used *xiao* to refer to themselves in poems as well, according to Shen.

“Since the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the *xiao* was often used in gatherings and meetings of the educated and literate, just like the *guqin*. It was so popular then that if one was not able to perform it, they were regarded as old-fashioned,” says Shen.

During his learning process, Shen summarized his experience, which paved the way for his later teaching career. In 2000, with the growth of his stature, he was invited to teach *dongxiao*, a genre of *xiao* popular in the Jiangnan (south of the Yangtze River, in its lower reaches) area of China, at an art school in Hangzhou. A year later, he established the Xixi Xiao Society with his students to better promote the instrument.

> At first, the *xiao* was just my hobby. Walking through all the difficulties, it gradually became my profession, my cause, and now, it's my mission to spread it.”
>
> **Shen Yingbiao,** *xiao* player and educator

Although the *xiao* was once popular in history, it gradually fell into oblivion. Nine major conservatories were established in the country after 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded, but it was not included as an independent subject for music education.

“The *xiao* sound was too light, which weakened its expressiveness. Moreover, there was not a standard for its intonation. These all made the instrument gradually marginalized,” says Shen.

“But the instrument kept its unique attractiveness, which paved the way for it to be revived. It produces heavenly music, and has a concise but profound temperament, which conforms to the traditional Chinese aesthetic idea that, ‘the greatest music has the faintest notes’,” he adds.

In recent years, the instrument has regained its vitality with improved tools and skills to make it, which means it can produce louder sounds now and can perform in solos. The criteria for its intonation has also been set.

“The *xiao* is such a good instrument. It's cheap, easy to carry, can produce gorgeous music and piping the *xiao* is healthy. I just cannot wait to make more people know about it,” says Shen.

From his perspective, piping a *xiao* is also a way of cultivating yourself. “Compared with others, the *xiao* is an extremely simple instrument. It is only part of a bamboo with holes. Since it is so simple that you can hardly make any changes on it, you can only change yourself, like your posture and movement when piping, to make your music performance better and better,” says Shen.

“It's actually an introspective process. You repeat and improve yourself, so that you are increasingly skilled, before finally you can create good music. The process is a big harvest that brings great joy,” he adds.

After 40, he finally devoted himself to the cause full-time. “Before that time, the biggest difficulty for me was to strike a balance between pursuing my interest and supporting my family. I could only devote myself to it part-time to ensure my income when I was younger. But after 40, when I didn't have many economic burdens, I could wholeheartedly put myself into it,” says Shen.

In 2007, the Xixi Xiao Society was renamed Qiantang (the old name of Hangzhou) Xiao Society, where people can learn to play the *xiao* and *xiao* lovers communicate with each other. In 2020, a free *xiao* course was started at the society, which has enabled nearly 1,000 people, especially old people who are retired, to learn the instrument, according to Shen.

Tao Xiaohong, who used to be a student of Shen, and now works as secretary-general of the Qiantang Xiao Society, says: “Shen has carried out deep research on the *xiao*, especially on how to show features of this old instrument in music performances. He is conscientious and unreserved in teaching, and has continued to improve it.

“It's a pity the *xiao* is still not as popular as we imagine now. In fact, it can produce brilliant music and touch people deeply. I agree with Shen's ideas on the *xiao* and would like to join his society to help him promote this instrument,” she adds.

Recalling his past years, Shen says, “At first, the *xiao* was just my hobby. Walking through all the difficulties, it gradually became my profession, my cause, and now, it's my mission to spread it.”

Ma Zhenhuan in Hangzhou contributed to this story.

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Lure of pandas is always worth bearing in mind

Countless column inches have already been filled concerning Yaya — the giant panda that was returned to China from the United States in April. However, the Yaya story dovetails nicely with a recent experience of mine, that is, getting up close and seeing a giant panda in the flesh for the very first time.

Owen Fishwick
Second Thoughts

But I didn't see just one panda, nor two, I saw a bunch of them. Luckily, through the nature of my work, I was recently given the opportunity to visit several giant panda research, breeding and rewilding bases in Southwest China's Sichuan province.

Now, before anyone mentions anything about being jealous or how lucky I am, also through the nature of my work, I have to cover a lot of ground in areas that may not be so interesting. So, swings and roundabouts.

First, the obvious. Yes, they are cute. The small ones at least. Their cute little black eyes, fluffy ears and wobbly movements are all adorable. As with humans, the larger they get, the less cute they become, but they remain an amazing sight to see nonetheless.

The wild population of giant pandas has been under protection for years and was once threatened by deforestation, farming, the building of infrastructure and other human activities. Today, there are an estimated 2,000 giant pandas living in the wild in Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi provinces.

Giant pandas are classified as a conservation-reliant vulnerable species, and so a great deal of effort has been put in to ensure that the wild population is not only sustained but supported through various programs and efforts.

It was this aspect of my experience that amazed in almost equal measure, from the majesty of the pandas, to the dedicated individuals who work around them, be they carers, breeders or groundskeepers. There is something about giant pandas that just makes people smile.

Xingxing's smile lights up a room, and it absolutely shimmers when she's talking about her passion — giant pandas, of course. Her passion also happens to be her job — she cares for the panda cubs at one of the panda breeding bases in Sichuan province — so things for her are pretty bright altogether.

She still smiles and speaks enthusiastically about her job and passion, even though she is asked the same questions day in day out by a fawning domestic and international media that are desperate to learn more about China's national treasure.

Then there's He Shengshan, who works on rewilding pandas born in captivity. Like pandas themselves, He is patient, thoughtful and giving of his time when discussing the work he does.

In order to successfully rewild a panda, its interactions with humans have to be greatly limited. And so, if He needs to enter the enclosure used in preparation for rewilding, he must dress up in a full-body panda outfit that has been sprayed with panda scents including but not limited to panda urine.

A giant panda at the Hetaoping wilderness training base in Sichuan province enjoys a bamboo snack. OWEN FISHWICK / CHINA DAILY

Though I did not enter the enclosure, I was afforded the opportunity to experience this as well. I donned a well-worn panda onesie, placed the hood over my head and mask over my face, and was then sprayed with panda urine. For those wondering, the answer is: “No, it doesn't smell as bad as you might think.” But like I said before, swings and roundabouts.

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SPORTS

CYCLING

Giro's China return is ride on time

Famous Italian race visits Yangtze Delta region for feast of cycling fun

By HE QI
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Legendary rider Andy Schleck takes a selfie before the start of Sunday's Ride Like A Pro race. LIU HAIBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Competitors are all smiles as they wait to start Sunday's Giro d'Italia Ride Like A Pro Yangtze River Delta Open road race in Shanghai's Qingpu district. LIU HAIBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tegshbayar Batsaikhan of Mongolia crosses the finish line to win Sunday's elite group race. WANG LIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

The 2023 Giro d'Italia Ride Like A Pro Yangtze River Delta Open treated Chinese cycling fans to a two-day carnival of top-class road-racing action and entertainment over the weekend.

The event not only attracted some of the world's leading riders, local government support, and throngs of cycling enthusiasts, but also served to showcase the Yangtze River Delta region's thriving economic and cultural sectors.

This year's event — the third time the prestigious Italian race has visited China via this promotional model — comprised a circuit race geared toward amateur riders on Saturday, followed by an elite-level road race on Sunday.

The 88-kilometer route of the road race traversed three areas within the so-called "integrated demonstration zone" — commencing and concluding in Shanghai's Qingpu district, and passing through Jiashan county, Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, and the Wujiang district of Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

This international event was jointly hosted by the Shanghai Administration of Sports, local government and sports bureaus of the relevant regions, the Yangtze River Delta Ecological Green Integration Demonstration Zone Executive Committee, the Shanghai Cycling Association, and a number of other organizations.

Legendary rider Andy Schleck was making his second appearance at the Giro d'Italia Yangtze River Delta Open, and hailed this year's edition as a major upgrade on his debut in 2019.

"I finished the 70-kilometer road race across Qingpu district last time. But when I see this year's organization, I feel that, whether it be the track, the carnival or the organization of the entire event, it is more professional and on a larger scale. In addition, more people have attended this year's event," said Schleck, who won the 2010 Tour de France and the Giro's young rider classification in 2007.

"The Giro d'Italia Yangtze River Delta Open Race, as an international and professional cycling event, represents one of the largest, high-level, and most influential cycling events to have taken place in the Yangtze River Delta in recent years," said Gu Jun, vice-secretary-general of the Shanghai Municipal People's Government.

"Through hosting this event, we aim to foster closer ties among the governments of Qingpu, Wujiang, and Jiashan, thereby showcasing our shared vision of development, construction, and mutually beneficial cooperation in the integrated development demonstration zone of the Yangtze River Delta," said Gu, who is also the director of both the Shanghai Development and Reform Commission, and the Executive Committee of the Integrated Demonstration Zone.

Saturday's circuit race featured five categories — open, master, team time trial, youth, and family fun ride. Located on Dianshanhu Avenue, the design of the course allowed participants of all ages and ability levels to take part.

Over 100 riders competed in Sunday's elite road race, with the 88-km route taking in the Yangtze River Delta ecological development demonstration zone, and passing through the ancient town of Zhujiajiao, Wujiang, and Jiashan.

Tegshbayar Batsaikhan of Mongolia topped the podium ahead of second-placed Kongphob Thimachai of Thailand, and Bold Iderbold of Mongolia in third spot.

"The essentials of cycling stay the same, people who ride the fastest will win the race eventually. But what has changed is the size," Schleck said of cycling's global boom in recent years.

He added that cycling is thriving outside of its traditional European stronghold, with events like last weekend's increasingly popular in North America, China, and the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, community activities and public participation are also on the rise.

"On the professional side, I don't think that in the big races riders are faster compared to when I was racing. However, I do think lower down the levels riders are becoming faster. So, the density of good riders is a lot higher than it was a couple of years ago," explained Schleck, adding that improvements in cycling equipment have also contributed to the rapid development of the sport.

China's two-time Olympic track champion Zhong Tianshi hailed the vast scope of the Giro d'Italia Ride Like a Pro as a great way of promoting cycling.

"We have a very large group of participants, including children riding on balance bikes, the youth group, professional athletes competing on professional courses, and amateur athletes, which allows for leisurely cycling in an excellent environment. So this event appeals to a wide range of participants," said Zhong, who won team sprint gold for China at the 2016 Rio and 2020 Tokyo Games.

"Although China is considered a top cycling nation, most people still associate bicycles with transportation," Zhong added. "But now, when you witness the scenes at this two-day festival, you can feel that Chinese people's perception of cycling is changing, and this is a really positive development."

BASKETBALL

Miami steamrollers red-faced Celtics

Miami Heat guard Gabe Vincent drives to the basket during Game 3 of the NBA Eastern Conference finals against the Boston Celtics on Sunday in Miami. The eighth-seeded Heat romped to a 128-102 victory to take a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven series. AP

MIAMI — Erik Spoelstra had his team fully expecting that Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finals would be extremely difficult, that the Miami Heat were going to have to take the best shot that a desperate bunch of Boston Celtics could muster.

He was wrong.

It was a Heat romp — and a team that had to pull off a frantic rally just to make the playoffs is now one win from the NBA Finals.

Gabe Vincent scored a career-high 29 points, Duncan Robinson added 22 and the eighth-seeded Heat rolled past the Celtics 128-102 on Sunday night. Miami leads the series 3-0, with a chance to finish off a stunning sweep on Tuesday night at home in Game 4.

"That was a solid, mature, professional approach," said Spoelstra, now on the brink of a sixth trip to the NBA Finals as Miami's coach. "There's a lot of pent-up stuff here and we're getting closer, but we still have to finish this off."

Caleb Martin scored 18, Jimmy Butler finished with 16, Bam Adebayo had 13 and Max Strus added 10 for Miami. Every team in NBA history that has won the first three games of a best-of-seven has ultimately prevailed; the Heat are 8-0 in that situation.

"The rim was as big as the ocean for everybody," Adebayo said, after Miami shot 57 percent.

Jayson Tatum scored 14 and Jaylen Brown added 12 for the second-seeded Celtics, who won three times on Miami's floor on the way to winning last season's East finals — but simply never had a chance in this one and basically emptied the bench for the fourth quarter.

"I just didn't have them ready to play," said Boston coach Joe Mazzulla, who has been the subject of tons of criticism in this series — and will surely face more going into Tuesday. "Whatever it was, whether it was the starting lineup or an adjustment, I have to get them in a better place, ready to play. That's on me."

Grant Williams and Payton Pritchard each added 12 for Boston.

"To their credit, they're playing well above their means," Brown said. "They're ballin' right now and I've got to give them respect. Gabe Vincent, Martin, Strus, Duncan Robinson, guys that we should be able to keep under control are playing their (butts) off."

The NBA Finals start June 1, and the way things are going, that might mean the league is about to go a few days without games. The Western Conference finals could end Monday; Denver leads that series against the Los Angeles Lakers 3-0. And now, the East finals could end Tuesday.

"It's the first to four games," Vincent said. "We're not satisfied with three."

There's never been a season where both conference finals ended in sweeps; it happened in 1957 in the division finals immediately preceding the title series, when Boston beat Syracuse 3-0 and St. Louis beat Minneapolis 3-0.

Of all the 3-0 series leads in NBA history, this one might be the most unexpected — a No 8 seed in the Heat, a team that struggled just to get into the playoffs, a team that was less than three minutes away from being eliminated in the play-in tournament, getting past top-seeded Milwaukee in five games, then fifth-seeded New York in six, and now on the brink of denying the Celtics a second consecutive East crown.

And the Heat let Boston know how much they were enjoying this one.

Mindful that Boston's Al Horford directed a timeout signal toward the Miami bench during Game 1 when the Celtics were on a second-quarter spurt to build a comfortable lead, Butler did the same to Horford as the Heat were running away in the third quarter of Game 3.

Besides, the Heat rallied to win Game 1 anyway. There was no rally required in Game 3 by the Heat. There was barely one attempted by the Celtics, for that matter.

"I don't even know where to start," Brown said. "It's an obvious letdown. I feel like we let our fan base, organization down. We let ourselves down. And it was collective. We can point fingers, but in reality, it was just embarrassing."

Boston got within 61-49 when Marcus Smart had a three-point play on the opening possession of the second half. The rest was all Miami, which immediately answered with a 28-7 run to open a 33-point lead at 89-56, which had the building rolling. The lead was so big, and there was so much time left, that the sellout crowd of 20,088 actually was subdued a bit by the time it was over.

They might have been yelled-out. Or maybe they were saving it for the hockey on Monday night, when the Florida Panthers — another No 8 seed on a magical playoff run in South Florida — will try to take a 3-0 lead in their East finals series against the Carolina Hurricanes.

"We'll decompress tomorrow," Spoelstra said, "but we'll really get our minds right to finish this thing off."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

SOCCER

Ancelotti condemns Vinicius racist abuse

BARCELONA — Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said Spanish soccer has a racism problem and needs to be prepared to halt matches, after Madrid star Vinicius Junior was again the target of abuse during a 1-0 defeat at Valencia in La Liga on Sunday.

"The Spanish league has a problem, and Vinicius is not the problem. Vinicius is the victim. There's a very serious problem," Ancelotti said, adding that Vinicius was "sad, not angry" after the incidents at the Mestalla.

Play was delayed for several minutes in the second half after Vinicius appeared to be racially abused by a Valencia supporter.

The Brazilian forward stood in front of the fans behind the goal and pointed to one, with teammate Eder Militao by his side.

Vinicius was later sent off in added time at the end of the game for hitting Hugo Duro during a brawl, with Valencia triumphing through Diego Lopez's first-half goal.

"The fact I thought about taking him off because of the racist atmosphere does not seem good to me," Ancelotti told reporters.

"What has happened today has happened before, but not like that, it's unacceptable."

Vinicius has been racially abused at several stadiums this season in Spain and an effigy of him was hung from a bridge in the Spanish capital by Atletico Madrid fans.

La Liga has filed legal complaints to Spanish authorities on multiple occasions this season, with the league pledging on Sunday to do so again after investigating. However, Ancelotti said it was not helping.

"What has happened? Reports, and nothing at all has come from it. The solution is to stop the game," continued the coach.

"I am very sad, this has never happened to me — I've never had to take off a player because of insults.

"He's a kid, he likes playing football, but in these conditions it's very complicated."

Vinicius took to Instagram after the defeat. "The prize for the racists today is that they have sent me off. It's not football, it's La Liga," wrote the 22-year-old.

The forward said Spain was viewed as "a country of racists" in his homeland Brazil.

"The league that once belonged to Ronaldinho, Ronaldo, Cristiano (Ronaldo) and (Leo) Messi, now belongs to racists," added Vinicius.

La Liga said in a statement that it was investigating the incident and would take legal action if a hate crime had been committed.

The Spanish top flight said it has been "proactive" in previous cases of racism against Vinicius, filing nine complaints with relevant authorities and prosecutors.

After Vinicius' standoff with Valencia supporters, referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea spoke to stadium officials, who made an announcement calling for racist insults to stop before play resumed around 10 minutes later.

In his post-match report, the referee wrote that a fan shouted "monkey, monkey" at the player.

"There's a lack of respect for Vinicius shown continuously at almost every stadium in Spain," Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos told Movistar.

Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois said he heard some "monkey noises" after around 20 minutes and said he would have walked off with Vinicius if the Brazilian chose to stop playing.

"If Vini wants to keep playing, we keep playing, but if Vini says he's not playing anymore, I'm leaving the pitch with him, because we cannot tolerate these things," Courtois told Movistar.

Players from both sides ended up in a brawl in stoppage time which ended with a red card for Vinicius for lashing out at Duro with his arm, although the Valencia forward was pictured with his arm around the Brazilian's neck.

On Monday, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva condemned the racist abuse, and called for FIFA and the Spanish league to take "serious measures".

AFP

BADMINTON

SUZHOU THRILLER A SMASH HIT

Team China caps dramatic week's action with record-extending triumph at Sudirman Cup

By SHI FUTIAN
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A third straight Sudirman Cup title cemented China's dominance of badminton's prestigious mixed team championship in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Sunday.

However, the epic effort required to fend off their rivals last week suggested Chinese players will face major challenges to retain their crown in the future.

With the deafening roar of around 7,000 spectators filling the Suzhou Olympic Sports Center, and tens of millions of fans glued to the action on TV, Team China delivered under pressure to beat South Korea 3-0 in Sunday's final.

Men's singles ace Shi Yuqi, reigning women's singles Olympic champion Chen Yufei and world No 1 mixed doubles pair Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong were the heroes, sweeping the Koreans to secure victory.

Despite their individual brilliance, all the Chinese players were keen to stress the triumph was a collective effort.

"If I can win my match and ensure the players after me face a 2-0 situation, then that eases the pressure a bit and all they need to do is focus on their matches. Simply reaching the final was an extremely tough journey. So in Sunday's final, all the Team China players shared the same goal of winning," said Shi.

China breezed through the group stage, beating Egypt, Singapore and Denmark, all 5-0, before seeing off Indonesia 3-0 on Friday in the first knockout round.

An epic seven-hour semifinal tussle with Japan, however, pushed Team China to its limit, with the reigning champion somehow managing to battle back from the brink of elimination and prevail 3-2.

China found itself trailing 2-1 after Huang Dongping and Feng Yanzhe lost the opening mixed doubles rubber, and Chen Yufei was defeated by women's world No 1 Akane Yamaguchi. Shi Yuqi managed to get China off the mark by winning a tough men's singles three-setter against Kodai Naraoka.

Liu Yuchen and Ou Xuanyi were then faced with a must-win men's doubles clash, and they obliged in dramatic fashion — saving four match points to rescue the defending champion. Women's doubles pair Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan completed the stunning comeback to seal glory.

The enthralling semifinal highlighted the increasingly stiff competition China faces on the global stage.

Denmark's Viktor Axelsen remains the world No 1 in men's singles, where the highest-ranked Chinese player is Shi at No 10. In the women's singles, reigning Olympic champion Chen Yufei is now world No 4, and her compelling battle with the top-ranked Yamaguchi of Japan was another wonderful advertisement for the sport.

Men's double heroes Ou and Liu still only rank No 5 in the world, although China tops the standings in the mixed and women's doubles, with Zheng and Huang, and Chen Qingchen and Jia retaining their No 1 positions this week.

Back when legends Lin Dan and Zhang Ning held court, Team China was the undisputed dominant force in every discipline. Whether China's new generation can truly fill those greats' shoes remains to be seen. However, in Suzhou they showed they certainly don't lack for determination and persistence.

"You can say that my skills are not the best and you can say that I'm even a mediocre player, but you can never say that I lack fighting spirit and resolve. I never give up on any match and I never run away from my responsibilities," said an emotional Chen Yufei after her victory over world No 2 An Se-young of South Korea, which followed Saturday's defeat to Yamaguchi.

"No matter what physical condition I'm in, I always want to win once I step onto the court. No one should underestimate me. I have great courage from all the people and friends who support me."

Close connection

Last week's action marked the first time many international players had returned to China since the pandemic.

The foreign stars enjoyed a warm welcome from fans in Suzhou — none more so than world No 1 Axelsen. The Dane, who speaks fluent Mandarin, sustained a left hamstring injury during a quarterfinal match and subsequently withdrew from the tournament. His silver lining was the support and best wishes he received from Chinese fans.

"I'm on my way home at the airport, and I want to express my thanks to all the Chinese fans who have been supporting me. There were so many Chinese fans cheering for me at the venue, hotel and online. I'm so happy to return to China to play. I hope the next time I can play more matches in China, and I hope I can recover as soon as possible," Axelsen said in a video posted on his Weibo account.

Pusarla V. Sindhu of India was also impressed by the atmosphere in Suzhou.

"This is the first time after a long time for me to come to China. I think the facilities here are very good and I can feel the enthusiasm of the crowds, which are fantastic. And here we have a really big stadium. I'm happy to be back in China again," Sindhu told reporters.

Organizers ratcheted up the feel-good factor by hosting a series of retirement ceremonies for people who have forged careers in badminton. Chen Long, the 2016 Rio Olympic gold medalist, was among the players to be honored.

"I decided to end my badminton career here at the Sudirman Cup. It was not an easy decision, and it was hard for me to say goodbye. Right now, I'm pretty emotional. I want to thank Team China, my family and all the fans. The 17 years I spent in the national team was the best time of my life," said Chen Long.

"I want to share my experience with the younger generation of players. I hope the young Team China can continue to blossom, and I will keep contributing to this sport."

Team China celebrates with the Sudirman Cup after Sunday's 3-0 final victory over South Korea at the Suzhou Olympic Sports Center. PHOTOS BY WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

Organizers excel

To ensure the world's elite badminton aces enjoyed the best possible competition and living environment, local organizers pulled out all the stops.

Feng Tao, an official of the Suzhou Olympic Sports Center, said ensuring the courts were of the highest quality was a priority.

"For instance, the gap between any two pieces of wood flooring under the courts should not exceed one millimeter. Amateur players would probably not notice the difference, but the pros are very sensitive to the quality of the courts," Feng told media.

"After we finished preparing the courts, we asked players to train on them, and then we made adjustments based on their feedback. We made sure they enjoyed the best courts."

Shuttlecocks are sensitive to even the slightest current of air, so ensuring the correct conditions inside the venue was another task that required extreme precision and care. Air-conditioning vents were, therefore, installed under the seats in the stands.

The lights inside the venue were also state of the art. Feng explained that providing players with the correct illumination level (measured in lux) was crucial.

"Usually in training venues, the lights are just 500 lux, but in our venue the lights reach 1,800 lux. Also, we have to ensure the lights are shadow-less, so the players aren't affected by the lights and can focus on their matches," Feng added.

About 300 volunteers, mostly local university students, served at the Sudirman Cup. From translators to guides, the volunteers provided players, media and all participants with comprehensive help.

"We all know that the Sudirman Cup is the world's top badminton competition, and we have players and fans from all over the world gathered here. As volunteers, we represent not just ourselves but also the image of the city," said volunteer Fan Wenjie.

A number of promotional badminton events were staged on the sidelines of the tournament. One highlight of these activities was the visit of star Chinese players Huang Dongping, Chen Qingchen and Shi Yuqi to local primary and middle schools to interact with and coach students.

"Badminton has a huge fan base in China, especially among young people. Through these activities, we hope our champions can pass on their values and spirit to the next generation and enrich their lives," said Xia Xuanze, a vice-president of the Chinese Badminton Association.